UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

THE VIETNAMESE *ĐÀN BẦU*: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF AN INSTRUMENT IN DIASPORA

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in

MUSIC

by
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June 2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Vietnamese *Đàn Bầu*: A Cultural History of an Instrument in Diaspora

by

Lisa Beebe

In Vietnam and its diaspora, the *đàn bầu* monochord zither is a symbol of cultural pride. Based on fieldwork conducted in Vietnam and in diaspora communities between 2015-2017, this study of the đàn bầu argues that the instrument is a site where state institutions, individual musicians, and audiences in Vietnam and the diaspora articulate myriad narratives of personal and national identities. In contemporary Vietnam, the state maintains a discourse that positions the đàn bầu as a musical representative of national culture, rooted in an imagined past.

In the diaspora, the đàn bầu is similarly emblematic of Vietnamese identity, but the dimensions of the "nation" are continually in flux. Due to legacies of trauma in the diaspora, musicians and audiences actively separate Vietnamese culture from the current nation state. The đàn bầu represents Vietnamese heritage, while also articulating the personal and political concerns of life in the diaspora. Musicians use the đàn bầu to traverse political and aesethetic expectations in Vietnam, in diaspora communities, and in the liminal space of tourist performance.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to my teachers, mentors, and friends for their extensive support throughout this project. I wish to thank my dissertation committee, Professor Dard Neuman and Jason Gibbs, for their keen insights and contributions during the various stages of researching and writing. I sincerely appreciate the generous mentorship of my advisor, Tanya Merchant, who unwaveringly supported this project from the spark of an idea to its completion, reading countless drafts and patiently offering feedback along every step of the way. I am also grateful to my first mentors at Hiram College: Tina Spencer Dreisbach and Paul Dreisbach for sharing their love of music and Ella Kirk and Jim Hightower for inspring me to continue my studies. I must also thank my đàn bầu teacher, Mr. Vụ Hồng Thịnh, for his guidance, expertise, and invaluable musical friendship. I would also like to acknowledge the kindness and support of Ms. Tô Lê Hằng and Ms. Vân-Ánh Võ, both of whom graciously gave their time and assistance throughout this project.

I also wish to acknowledge the individuals who gave me their time and assistance in Vietnam. I am extremely grateful to the Lieu and Nguyễn families for generously welcoming me into their homes and into their families during my stay in Ho Chi Minh City. My research in Vietnam would not have been possible without the financial support of the University of California, Santa Cruz Arts Dean's Fund for Excellence during summer 2015 and a UCSC dissertation quarter sabbatical grant during spring 2016. The writing of this dissertation was made possible through a UCSC Chancellor's Dissertation Year Fellowship.

I would also like to thank my parents, Suzanne and David, for their support and my grandmother, Darla, for always taking out the map and following along with me, no matter where I go. To my Santa Cruz family, Emily, Adam, Abbey, Andrew, Ilana, Pablo, and Sophia: thank you for making our house a home. For their intellectual, emotional, and caffeine-related support over the years, I thank my dear friends Jay, Madison, Faith, Michael, Graham, Becky, Patrick, Rena, Meredith, and Sami.

Ultimately, this project would not have been possible without the generosity of numerous musicians in Vietnam and the diaspora. It is in recognition of their artistry, passion, and spirit that this work is dedicated.

Chapter One. Introduction

On an October evening in 2014, Vietnamese-American musician Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ reflects on the "thick summer sound" of Vietnam. "In a way," she explains, "I missed the summer in Vietnam so I brought it here to the US with me through George Gershwin's 'Summertime.'" (Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ, personal communication, August 27, 2016).[1] Tonight, Ms. Vân-Ánh is bringing the Hanoi summers of her childhood to a concert hall in in Sunnyvale, California through an adaptation of the song for the Vietnamese *đàn bầu* monochord. Ms. Vân-Ánh's "Summertime" shows influences of Gershwin's melody, but she has made the piece her own through extended techniques for the đàn bầu, including bowing the string to create a buzzing sound reminiscent of swarming insects on a humid afternoon. She later explains that the effect of the bow is also "almost like the growl of pain, desire, and longing inside you at some points." (ibid.) For Ms. Vân-Ánh, the đàn bầu is not only able to depict the sensory memories of a humid summer day, but also conveys a sense of nostalgia and longing for a place left behind.

A monochord zither, the đàn bầu (also known by Vietnamese musicians as the *đàn dộc huyền* or *độc huyền cầm*, both meaning "one string instrument") is

[1] Ms. Vân Ánh arranged "Summertime" for đàn bầu and piano accompaniment in 2013 with composer and jazz guitarist Nguyen Le. The song is originally from George Gershwin's 1935 opera *Porgy and Bess.* Gershwin's depiction of African American characters is embroiled in larger questions about race and music, cultural appropriation, and performance ethics (Allen and Cunningham 2005; Arewa 2006). This instance of a Vietnamese American musician performing a white American composer's depiction of African American culture

comprised of a steel string stretched over a wooden box.[2] The string is attached to a wooden rod extending perpendicularly from one end of the body of the instrument. Historically, a gourd attached to this wooden rod acted as a resonator. Today, the đàn bầu is usually amplified, and a wooden approximation of a gourd serves only as a decorative feature (see figure 1.1). In Vietnamese, "bầu" means "gourd" in reference to this feature, while "đàn" refers to any string instrument (e.g., *đàn tranh* sixteen-string zither and the *đàn nguyệt* two-string lute). To play the đàn bầu, the musician plucks the string with the right hand (using a small bamboo or wooden plectrum) while lightly touching the string with the crook of the fifth finger to produce a series of overtones. The series is as follows: 1/2 the string is Do_1, 1/3 is Sol_1, 1/4 is Do_2, 1/5 is Mi_2, and 1/6 is Sol_2 (Lưu Hữu Phước, et al.: 1994).[3]

[2] Vietnamese instruments commonly have two or more names, reflecting regional, linguistic, and cultural differences. As my interlocutors consistently referred to the instrument as đàn bầu (and for the sake of clarity), I refer to the instrument as the đàn bầu throughout this dissertation.

[3] My Vietnamese interlocutors used the Solfège system when describing musical notation. This is a legacy of French colonial influence on musical education. Trần Quang Hải notes that until the early twentieth century, Vietnamese musical notation corresponded to the Chinese system, with syllables for corresponding scale degrees (ho =1, xu = 2, xang =3, xê =4, công =5, liu =6). See Trần Quang Hải, "Introduction to Vietnamese Music," http://www.honque.com/HQ020/bKhao_tqHai.htm.

Figure 1.1: A đàn bầu monochord.
Photo by the author.

Discourse surrounding the Vietnamese origins of the đàn bầu marks the instrument as a source of national pride. While other Southeast and East Asian cultures have monochords similar in construction to the đàn bầu, the Vietnamese instrument is unique in its use of natural harmonics rather than stopping the string directly. Vietnamese musicologist Trần Văn Khê notes that the Japanese *ichigen-kin* ("one string zither") is approximately the same size as the đàn bầu, but does not have a handle; instead, the string is secured under the resonating box (1962: 134). To play the ichigen-kin, the musician lightly presses the string with an ivory tube worn on the middle finger of the left hand while plucking the string with an ivory tube worn on the index finger of the right hand (Okazaki 2005: 136). The Khmer *say diev* (also known as the *khse muoy,* both meaning "one string") is a stick zither that Khmer musicians consider to be one of the oldest instruments in Cambodia. The instrument consists of a gourd held against the chest and a metal string plucked

with a metal plectrum on the middle finger (Sam 1998: 191). The Thai *pin pia* is similar in structure to the say diev, but may have up to three or four strings. Like the đàn bầu, the pin pia utilizes harmonics to play a melody on one string, while plucking the additional open strings for accompaniment. (McGraw 2007: 116-117). Tạ Thâm, a music historian and instrument maker in Hanoi, postulates that early đàn bầu were based on an instrument of the Mường minority group in Vietnam. This instrument, the *tàn máng,* is similar in that it is also a monochord, comprised of a plucked bamboo thread that is carved from a bamboo tube: however, the tàn máng does not use harmonics like the đàn bầu (Gibbs 1996: 16). Asserting the Vietnamese origins of the đàn bầu are crucial to the monchord's status as a national instrument.

Of all of these monochords, the Chinese *yixianqin* (also known as the *duxianqin,* "lone string zither") is the most similar to the đàn bầu in terms of structure and playing technique. According to ethnomusicologist Lucie Rault-Leyrat, several minority groups in Guangxi autonomous region (that borders Vietnam to the northwest) play the yixianqin (1989: 65). Considering the history of migration and cultural exchange in the Red River Delta, it is plausible that these monochords could have a shared history, before political borders divided Guangxi and Vietnam. The đàn bầu's origin is a politicall charged issue, with Vietnamese scholars emphasizing the instrument's distinctiveness from the Chinese instrumentarium.

A cultural history of the đàn bầu demonstrates the instrument's role in political and personal narratives of national identity in Vietnam and its diaspora. Definitions of Vietnamese "culture" and "tradition" are variously contested in Vietnam and in the diaspora, dependent on the historical and political situation.

Most broadly, Vietnamese discourse surrounding "culture" includes conversations surrounding musical performance, the visual arts, literature, and theater. This discourse is often teleological, using "tradition" or a constructed linkage with past practices to legitimize presentist aesthetic and political concerns. The Vietnamese state constructs a vision of culture rooted in the authority of the state, while diasporic communities use culture as a symbol of Vietnamese heritage, separate from statist culture. Additionally, musical performances for tourists stage a version of Vietnamese culture and tradition carefully constructed to appeal to foreign audiences' tastes and expectations. Vietnamese musicians use the đàn bầu to traverse these three contexts—Vietnam, the diaspora, and the liminal space of tourist performance.

The đàn bầu is able to traverse these three contexts in part because the instrument is a visual symbol of Vietnam as well as a sonic reminder. Attending an October 2015 concert in Hanoi, for example, I noticed musicians placed a đàn bầu prominently on stage although they did not play the instrument during the performance. In Hội An (a UNESCO-recognized World Heritage Site), a folklore museum directed towards tourists displays the (electric) đàn bầu alongside artifacts from pre-industrial Vietnam. In the diaspora, promotional materials for the 2016 premiere of Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ's *The Odyssey: From Vietnam to America* featured a painting of a young woman riding a đàn bầu as a boat to cross the ocean.

This chapter focuses on the history of the đàn bầu within the broader context of Vietnamese political history. I begin with a geographical overview of my field sites in Vietnam, including Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Hoi An. As chapters six and

seven of this dissertation discuss Vietnamese music making in the Canadian, Australian, and Californian diasporas, the specifics of these field sites will be discussed in these chapters with the historical context of the diaspora.

A review of Vietnamese and English-langauge scholarship on Vietnamese music highlights the political role of the đàn bầu in Vietnamese nationalism. The discussion of the theoretical perspectives of this dissertation analyzes đàn bầu performance within the frameworks of nationalism and cultural politics. Following an overview of the methodologies employed in my research, I then provide a summary of each chapter.

Đàn bầu performance is a site where musicians and their audiences negotiate continually shifting interpretations of Vietnamese personal and political identities. The following discussion situates these negotiations within their historical and geographical context.

Geography: Vietnam

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Cộng Hòa Xã Hội Chù Nghĩa Việt Nam) is located in Southeast Asia, sharing a border to the north with China, to the southwest with Laos, and to the northwest with Cambodia, while the South China Sea borders Vietnam to the south and east (see figure two).4 Today, the country is divided into 50 provinces, each with an administrative center. While improved infrastructure—including a transnational railway, new highways, and several new airports—have made traveling throughout Vietnam easier and faster, regional distinctions still

[4] The South China Sea is known as *Biển Đông* or Eastern Sea in Vietnamese—an important political distinction due to longstanding border disputes with China.

distinguish northern, central, and southern Vietnamese cultural and linguistic practices.

Vietnam recognizes 54 ethnic groups within these 50 provinces, including the Việt majority who tend to live in urban areas and 53 minority groups who predominately live in mountainous areas. In Vietnamese, the Việt are referred to as kinh or urban (Phong Nguyễn 1998). The đàn bầu is an instrument of the Viet ethnic majority. While the đàn bầu provides insight into certain cultural histories of the people that make up the modern state of Vietnam and its diaspora, these histories address only one kind of perspective among wide variety of lived experiences.[5]

As the đàn bầu is an instrument of the Việt majority, I have focused my fieldwork in urban areas as these cities host centers for large musical gatherings, including conservatories, large concert venues, and centers for mass media production. Vietnam's larger cities also draw the most number of tourists and therefore the largest venues for tourist performances that showcase the đàn bầu. Furthermore, while đàn bầu musicians do live and work in rural areas in Vietnam, urban areas offer a concentration of teachers and musicians, often within particular neighborhoods. (For a list of primary Vietnamese state music institutions, see Appendix A.) In Vietnam, my research was concentrated in the urban centers of

[5] For a wider range of perspectives, the work of other scholars addressing the musics of Vietnam's minority groups both in Vietnam and in the diaspora are particularly useful. In English, the scholarship of ethomusicologists Amy Catin-Jairazbhoy (1981) and Lonán Ó'Briain (2013) explores the musics of the Hmong--an ethnic group of the mountainous regions of Vietnam, Laos, China, and Thailand. Ó'Briain (2014) considers the implications of musical performances for tourists by Yao and Hmong minority musicains in the mountenous northern town of Sapa. Amy Catin-Jairazbhoy and Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy have also worked with Hmong musicians living abroad in the California diaspora (1997). Phong T. Nguyễn also provides an overview of minority musics of Vietnam in *The Garland Handbook of Southeast Asian Music* (2008: 297-302).

Hanoi in northern Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City in southern Vietnam, and Hoi An in central Vietnam (see map in figure 1.2).

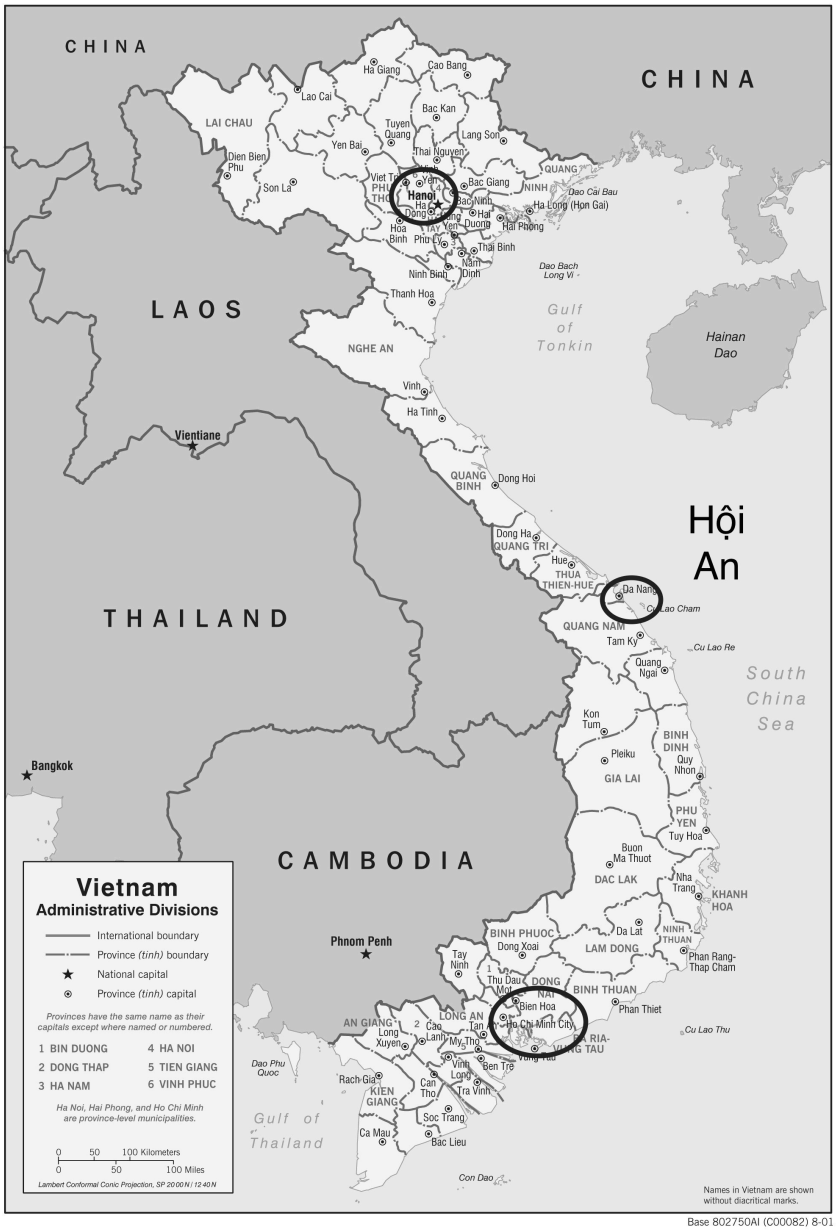

Figure 1.2: Political Map of Vietnam: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/cia-maps-publications/Vietnam.html

The capital city and locus of political power in Vietnam is Hanoi (*Hà Nội*), on the bank of the Red River (Sông Hồng)—*Hà Nội* meaning "river within" in

Vietnamese. Flowing southeast from the Yunnan province in southwestern China, through Hanoi, and then east to the Golf of Tonkin, the Red River drew the attention of French merchants seeking a travel route into China. The oldest part of Hanoi, known today as "The Old Quarter," draws a large number of tourists every year. Along with the Old Quarter Cultural Center (*Trung tâm giao lưu văn hóa phố cổ*), several of Vietnam's largest musical institutions—including the Vietnam Institute for Musicology (*Viện Âm Nhạc Việt Nam*), National Academy of Music (*Học Viện Âm Nhạc Quốc Gia Việt Nam*), and the VTV television stations that fund mass media programming—are all based in Hanoi.

While Hanoi is the capital, the largest city in Vietnam is Ho Chi Minh City (*Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh*), formerly known as Saigon (*Sài Gòn*). During the French occupation of Vietnam, Saigon was the capital of the southern colony of Cochinchina. After 1955, Saigon was then the capital of the Republic of South Vietnam (1955-1975). Following reunification in 1975, the city was renamed after military leader Hồ Chí Minh. The city is home to the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music, one of Vietnam's principal conservatories.

In central Vietnam, the city of Hội An (located on the coast of the South China Sea) was an historically important trading center. In 1999, UNESCO recognized the "Old Town" district of the Hội An as a World Heritage Site, resulting in a booming tourist economy. Live music performances at the Hội An Traditional Performance Theater as well as water puppet theater performances and displays of musical instruments, both at the Hội An Museum of Folk Culture and featuring the đàn bầu, are examples of tourist performances available daily in the Old Town.

Historical and Political Context

In order to frame a cultural history of the đàn bầu both in Vietnam and its diasporas, it is important to contextualize Vietnamese music history within a larger narrative of Chinese influence, dynastic rule, French imperialism, and nationalist projects of the 20th and 21st centuries. The earliest evidence of human activity on the land of what is now called Vietnam dates to approximately three to four thousand years ago on the plain of the Red River, not far from present-day Hanoi. During the Bronze Age, the Đồng Sơn Culture (known for their highly decorated bronze drums) thrived for four to five hundred years before the Han Chinese came to dominate the Red River Delta in the 1st century CE (Taylor 2013: 2). For the next 900 years, a series of Chinese empires controlled the delta.

While the influence of Chinese culture is apparent today in the Vietnamese language, food culture, and various other aspects of daily life, an attempt to separate "Vietnamese" culture from "Chinese" culture in premodern Vietnam would be anachronistic. As historian Keith Taylor notes, by the tenth century CE the people occupying what is today northern Vietnam were "an amalgam of settlers from the north and indigenous peoples; for centuries they had lived together, intermarried, developed bilingual habits of speech, and formed a regional perspective on imperial civilization" (ibid.: 50).

In 938 AD, Ngo Quyen defeated the southern Han army, forming a separate state in the Red River plain. A succession of dynasties followed: the Ly Dynasty (1009-1225), the Tran Dynasty (1225-1400), the Ho Dynasty (1400-1407), the Le Dynasty (1428-1527), and the Mac Dynasty (1528-1592). Throughout these

dynasties, northern kingdoms gradually expanded southward, annexing the kingdom of Champa and parts of the Khmer Empire (Dutton et. al 2012: xxiii-xxx).

In the 16th century, a period of political unrest led to two rival political factions, the Nguyen lords and the Trinh lords. A competition for control of the peninsula reached its peak in 1627, dividing the kingdom established by previous dynasties into two territories. After over a century of two divided kingdoms, Nguyen Phuc Anh defeated the Tay Son dynasty in 1802, uniting northern and southern territories into a state closely resembling Vietnam on the map today. Ruling under the name Gia Long, Nguyen Phuc Anh established the Nguyen dynasty, the last ruling dynasty of Vietnam (Taylor 2013: 395).

While French merchants had traveled to the peninsula since the 18th century, it was not until the 19th century that a French military presence was established in Gia Long's kingdom. Over several military conquests in the mid-1850s, the French gradually established control on the peninsula. By 1884, the French annexed the entire peninsula of Cochinchina. Along with parts of present day Laos and Cambodia, Cochinchina was incorporated into French Indochina in 1887.

France controlled Indochina until World War II. The Japanese occupation of the peninsula, supported by the pro-Vichy French administration, lasted from 1940-1945. Political unrest ignited by restrictive colonial policies and the exploitation of Indochina's natural resources led, in part, to the founding of the Viet Minh communist national liberation movement, led most famously by Marxist-Leninist revolutionary Ho Chi Minh beginning in 1941. With the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945, the Viet Minh occupied Hanoi and declared a provisional

government on September 2, 1945. The French attempt to reassert colonial power led to the First Indochina War (1946-1954).

After the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the Geneva Accords of 1954 divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel, with the north controlled by Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the south controlled by Emperor Bảo Đại's State of Vietnam. In 1955, after Bảo Đại's lost an election to Ngô Đình Diệm, the new Prime Minister established the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). As tensions mounted between North and South Vietnam, the peninsula was on the brink of war. During this time, the governments of North and South Vietnam opened state conservatories to harness the political potential of music. In 1956, the School of Music and Dance (*Trường Ca Vũ Nhạc Phổ Thông*) opened in Saigon. At the same time, the National Music School (*Trường Âm Nhạc Việt Nam*), today the National Academy of Music (*Học Viện âm Nhạc Quốc Gia Việt Nam*) opened in Hanoi in 1956. At first, these school mostly offered education in European classical music, but later incorporated traditional Vietnamese instruments into the curriculum. In order to build a repertoire for young musicians to perform on these traditional instruments in North Vietnam, composition and music theory students were "sent out to the provinces" to gather musical materials from various minority ethnic groups (Arana 1999: 51). Students were also sent to Chinese and Soviet conservatories, to learn how to adapt these musical materials into orchestral arrangements to be performed by large ensembles of folk instruments. Arana notes that the first such national orchestra was founded in 1960 (ibid: 52). In North and South Vietnam, state music

academies incorporated the đàn bầu into these folk orchestras, resulting in the standardization of đàn bầu pedagogy and repertoire.

From the 1950s, the United States increasingly took an active role in providing financial and military support to the non-communist government, including cultural and educational exchange. In 1965, the US military began an active involvement in ground combat, along with a continuous aerial bombing campaign. After the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973, American ground troops began leaving Vietnam in March. By the end of 1974, North Vietnam had begun a full-scale incursion into South Vietnam, culminating in the take over of the capital—the "Fall of Saigon"—on April 30, 1975.

Following the end of the war, an influx of political refugees left Vietnam. Most refugees were from southern Vietnam, fearing retribution from the north. Vietnamese immigrants were first temporarily resettled in refugee camps in the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, or Hong Kong. From these camps, refugees were sent to Canada, Australia, and European nations. The largest number of Vietnamese resettled in the United States. By 1989, approximately 1.2 million Vietnamese had immigrated to the United States. (*World Refugee Survey* 1990, cited in Nguyen 1995: 11). The largest group to immigrate to the United States since Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis, Vietnamese became the fifth largest Asian American group in the

country (Pelaud 2011: 8).[6] The government tried to avoid the creation of a Vietnamese enclave in one location, similar to the Cuban diaspora community in Miami, Florida. Literary scholar Isabelle Pelaud notes that despite the official dispersal policy, Vietnamese immigrants continued to move after resettlement, forming Vietnamese communities throughout the nation (Pelaud 2011: 12). The largest Vietnamese diaspora communities formed in California and Texas, with others in Washington D.C., Seattle, Minneapolis, New Orleans, and Orlando (Nguyen 1995: 11).

For decades after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, waves of Vietnamese political refugees emigrated to the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia, bringing with them the musical traditions and instruments of their homeland, including the đàn bầu. In the diaspora, musicians and audiences use the đàn bầu to communicate a shared sense of Vietnamese heritage while simultaneously articulating the distinct personal and political identities.

Throughout the twentieth century, political, cultural, and technological transformations directly impacted the construction and performance practices of the đàn bầu. By considering the history of the đàn bầu within Vietnamese culture, its role within the state conservatory system, and its performance in the Vietnamese diaspora, several patterns begin to emerge. Firstly, contemporary discourses about the đàn bầu are centered in issues of cultural identity and—in Vietnam—

[6] While the immigration of Vietnamese to the United States is most associated with the Fall of Saigon, smaller numbers of Vietnamese did immigrate to the United States earlier in the twentieth century as exchange students, scholars, and following World War II, as war brides. With the United States' involvement in the conflict in Vietnam, however, larger numbers of students came to study in the US, increasing from approximately 200 students from 1952-1959 to about three thousand between 1960-1969 (Pelaud 2011: 8).

relationships between the arts and the state. As ethnomusicologist Ingrid Bertleff noted in her survey of publications about the đàn bầu, including popular media, tourist websites, and Vietnamese state-funded scholarship, the instrument is promoted as an instrument unique to Vietnamese culture. In her 2006 analysis, Bertleff observed that as a solo instrument or a member or a larger ensemble, the đàn bầu "is featured…in several representation contexts. By this I mean performances that are mainly focused on the promotion of national culture and are often directed towards a foreign audience." (72) While all other Vietnamese instruments have roots in Chinese instruments, these "representation contexts" highlight the fact that the đàn bầu is unlike any other instrument in Asia. During my research, Vietnamese interlocutors regularly compared several Vietnamese instruments with Chinese equivalents (including the *đàn tỳ bà* four-string lute with the *pipa* or the *đàn tranh* sixteen-string zither with the *guzheng*). Interlocutors did not mention or downplayed, however, any potential connections between the đàn bầu and the duxianqin Chinese monochord. The promotion of the đàn bầu to signify and differentiate a unified, pan-Vietnamese identity, distinct from other cultures is intimately related to nationalism in post-Reunification Vietnam and, in particular, to centuries old political and cultural tensions with China.[7]

The đàn bầu is also part of a larger dialogue about preserving Vietnamese culture in light of western cultural influences. During my fieldwork in Vietnam, I observed a conversation regarding preservation and promotion of the đàn bầu

[7] Musicians also use instruments of ethnic minorities (such as the Jarai and Bahnhar *đàn t'rưng* xylophone) to represent a Vietnamese musical identity distinct from China. An example of this phenomenon is discussed in chapter six of this dissertation.

involving conservatory professors, students, and professional musicians. In October 2015, I attended a daylong conference about the status of the đàn bầu, hosted by the National Academy of Music in Hanoi. At the conference, professors and professional musicians affiliated with the conservatory shared their opinions on how to encourage more young people to take up study of the đàn bầu. The conference culminated in an evening concert at the Academy, featuring the đàn bầu. Repertoire ranged from traditional pieces played on solo đàn bầu to folk song arrangements for đàn bầu and an orchestra of other traditional instruments. Besides the traditional đàn bầu, the concert also showcased an "experimental" version of the instrument featuring two strings and two horns with the goal of creating a wider range for the instrument. While the extended đàn bầu drew significant audience attention, the closing number of the concert drew the most excited attention from the audience: a spectacular rendition of American rock band the Eagles' 1977 hit "Hotel California" on solo đàn bầu.[8] "Hotel California" was the most popular piece of the evening, with audience members cheering and clapping throughout the song and filming the performance on their cell phones.

These and other dialogues concerning the construction and repertoire of the đàn bầu reflect artistic choices as well as technological changes in Vietnam over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These are part of a greater narrative of the political and cultural impacts of French colonialism, Japanese and American occupation, and nearly a century of war. According to musician Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ, the amplification of the đàn bầu is a direct result of the Japanese

[8] A video of this "Hotel California" performance is available on YouTube via user Duc Viet, posted October 8, 2015 (https://youtu.be/TXMn6sGApk0).

occupation of Vietnam in the 1940s. The Japanese military's abandoned loudspeakers became the first amplifiers readily available in Vietnam, and the electric đàn bầu was born (Võ 2014). Music researcher Phạm Phúc Minh notes that before amplification, musicians used a microphone and loudspeaker combination to augment the volume of the đàn bầu (1999: 61).

In the Vietnamese diaspora, musicians perform the đàn bầu at festivals and events to celebrate their heritage. These musical celebrations include Vietnamese events, such as the History and Culture concerts in San Francisco, as well as pan-Asian cultural events, such as the Asian Heritage Street Celebration. Diaspora musicians also compose new works for the đàn bầu, using the instrument to articulate intersecting cultural and personal identities.

An overview of scholarship on the đàn bầu demonstrates how Vietnamese and western scholars frame the instrument as a national and cultural symbol of Vietnam. The following discussion of existing literature first considers studies of the đàn bầu by Vietnamese scholars, noting the importance placed upon the instrument's origins.

Literature Review

Vietnamese Scholarship

Considering the extent of the Vietnamese diaspora, it is not surprising that Vietnamese scholars in Vietnam and around the world have published scholarship on the đàn bầu in Vietnamese, English, and French. While the political climate in the location of publication influences the research questions and methods of these

scholars, several broad themes emerge. Literature solely focused on the đàn bầu typically concerns the instrument's origins, organology, and performance techniques. Scholars emphasize the Vietnamese origins of the instrument, distinct from Chinese influences. Telelogical narratives of the instrument's history emphasize twenty and twenty-first century adaptations to the đàn bầu as the culmination of systematic study of the instrument, resulting in necessary improvements to the đàn bầu's organology and performance practice.

Most recently, ethnomusicologist Trương Thị Quỳnh Hạnh completed a Ph.D. dissertation titled *Le Dan Bâu: Étude organologique et ethnomusicologique,* outlining the instrument's history, techniques, and primary pedagogical methods in Vietnam as well as proposing how the đàn bầu could be incorporated into music therapy (2009). In 1999, music researcher Phạm Phúc Minh devotes chapters of *Cây Đần Bầu: những âm thanh kỳ diệu* (The Đần Bầu: Marvelous Sounds) to the organology, history, and performance techniques of the instrument. He also includes a discussion of experimental adaptations to the instrument, including đàn bầu with two and five strings and a version of the monochord with frets. Titling this chapter "Improvements to the Đàn Bầu" (Những cải tiến Đần Bầu), Phạm notes that "many đàn bầu builders have long realized the shortcomings of the instrument, but it wasn't until the twentieth century that they began to study how to make the instrument better (1999: 59)."[9] Connecting innovation with improvement, Phạm argues that the amplification of the đàn bầu enhanced the sonic capabilities of the

[9] "Nhiều nghệ nhân đần bầu đã từ lâu nhận thấy cây đàn của minh còn một số nhược điểm, nhưng mãi đến những năm đâu của thế kỷ XX mời cớ người bắt tay vào nghiên cứu cài tiến nhằm khắc phục nhược điểm để cây Đần Bầu được hoàn thiện hơn."

monochord. As Vietnamese musicians began to amplify the đàn bầu, state music academies incorporated the instrument into conservatory folk orchestras, institutionalizing performance through standardized pedagogy and repertoire. Conceptualized as a guardian of tradition through innovation, the state plays an active role in the improvement of the đàn bầu. In *Nhạc khí truyền thống Việt Nam* [Traditional Music of Vietnam], music researchers Lưu Hữu Phước, Lê Huy and Minh Hiến provide and overview of the đàn bầu's construction and playing techniques, and speculates as to the origins of the đàn bầu, briefly describing similar monochords in Vietnamese minority groups (the Cham and the Muong) and in India, Japan, Cambodia, and China (1994).

A publication of the Vietnamese Institute for Musicology (*Viện Âm Nhạc*), this presentation of twentieth-century adaptations of the đàn bầu as "improvements" is in keeping with state narratives of progress. Teleological progress narratives of the đàn bầu have historical precedence. In 1960, composer and music researcher Nguyễn Xuân Khoát published an article in *The International Folk Music Journal* in French, describing the organology and a speculated history of the đàn bầu. After noting changes to the instrument during the 20th century, Nguyễn Xuân Khoát states that the instrument has been "the object of constant research in order to perfect it." (1960: 32) In tracing the history of the đàn bầu, Phạm Phúc Minh and Nguyễn Xuân Khoát demonstrate its importance to Vietnamese culture while their descriptions of current research to "perfect" the đàn bầu argue the instrument's continued relevance to modern Vietnamese music.

The importance of preserving the đàn bầu is also a key theme. In 1972, ethnomusicologist Trần Văn Khê published "Means of Preservation and Diffusion of Traditional Music in Vietnam" (in English) in the journal *Asian Music*, centered on the diffusion of traditional music practices in Vietnam before unification. He notes the importance of national schools of music in teaching Vietnamese instruments (such as the đàn bầu) to young musicians, specifically the National Music School in Saigon and the National Music School in Hanoi. Trần Văn Khê is the most well-known Vietnamese music scholar both in Vietnam and in the international academic community. Educated in France and active in the International Folk Music Council (later the International Council of Traditional Music), Trần Văn Khê published extensively in French and in Vietnamese before his death in 2015.

Vietnamese research on music in the diaspora largely mentions the đàn bầu in passing, included in larger surveys of diasporic musical activity. Tran Quang Haï has discussed performance in the diaspora from a global perspective, providing an extensive list of names and ensembles active in the late 1990s (2001). Phong T. Nguyễn's monograph *Searching for a Niche: Vietnamese Music at Home in America* focuses on music making in Vietnamese communities in the United States, examining "artists' lives, at home, at work, and from stage to stage." (1995: 6). Nguyễn's survey of musicians active in the 1990s, is a brief but useful insight into the instruments and genres performed by Vietnamese immigrants and first generation families, but also serves as a useful reminder that home performance is an important part of musical life in the diaspora.

English Language Literature on Vietnamese Music

Throughout the twentieth century, war and political turmoil hindered western scholarship on Vietnamese music.[10] Following the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and the United States in the 1990s, scholars began to increasingly publish Vietnamese musical research. English-language scholarship has focused on the history of Vietnamese music considering the implications of French colonization and the political impacts of state control under the Vietnamese Communist party. Concerning the syncretic relationship between western and Vietnamese musical styles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, music historian Jason Gibbs has published a series of articles concerning the development of Vietnamese popular song (2000, 2003), the history of national anthems in Vietnam (2007), and the cultural phenomenon of rock and roll in Vietnam (2008).

Scholars also consider the influence of state policies on music performance. Ethnomusicologist Barley Norton highlights the institutionalization of *chầu văn* spirit medium rituals in contemporary Vietnam (2009). Considering the effects of globalization on Vietnamese popular music at the turn of the twenty-first century, ethnomusicologist Dale Olsen examines the politics of memory in contemporary Vietnam (2008). In her work on *nhạc dân tộc hiện đại* or contemporary national music ethnomusicologist Miranda Arana explains how arrangements of Vietnamese folk songs typical of the genre illustrate the relationship between 20th century

[10] A notable exception is Stephen Addiss' work in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s. Addiss recorded Vietnamese musician Phạm Duy singing Vietnamese folk songs and his original compositions for an album released by Smithsonian Folkways in 1986. Addiss also edited Phạm Duy's English-language publication *Musics of Vietnam* (1975). Smithsonian Folkways also released an album of Addiss' recordings of *ca trù* and *cải lương* songs (1971).

Vietnamese nationalism, the establishment of national conservatories, and the cultivation of a standardized, pan-Vietnamese musical canon (1999). Nhạc dân tộc hiện đại (which Arana translates as "neotraditional" music) is a twentieth-century genre that draws on elements of western music (e.g., western notation, concerto form) for new compositions featuring ensembles of Vietnamese instruments.

Scholars have also studied music of the Vietnamese diaspora. Ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong discusses the work of Vietnamese-American musician Phạm Duy in Southern California's Little Saigon community, noting how the composer incorporated technologies available in the United States to promote his music (2004). In her study of hát bội theater performance in Vietnam and Southern California, ethnomusicologist Kim Nguyen Tran considers how theater enacts conflicting narratives of official and cultural memory (2017). While Wong, Nguyễn (1995) and Trần (2001) chronicle music making in Vietnam and Vietnamese communities in the United States—"home" and "diaspora"—ethnomusicologist Adelaida Reyes' fieldwork centers on music in the liminal space of the Vietnamese refugee experience. In *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free,* Reyes discusses how forced migration results in dramatically different processes of adaptation for refugees, processes that require a separate paradigm from voluntary migration studies (Reyes 1999, xiv). As evidence, Reyes documents Vietnamese refugee's experiences from departure (life in asylum camps) to resettlement in the United States from 1983-1993. Reyes' study is located in four Vietnamese communities: resettlement camps in Palawan and Bataan in the Philippines, a diaspora community in New Jersey, and Little Saigon in Orange County. Through her

interviews with musicians and observations of both public and private performances, Reyes considers how factors such as class, ethnicity, age, and generation influenced the ways Vietnamese related to music as a connection to both Vietnam and the new cultures of their diaspora communities abroad.

Ethnomusicologist Alexander Cannon considers how technology has shifted the concept of diaspora in his work with Nguyễn Vĩnh Bảo, a musician who lives in Ho Chi Minh City but connects with his students around the world via the Internet. Due to the relationships Nguyễn Vĩnh Bảo is able to maintain with musicians both in Vietnam and abroad, Cannon draws attention to "a need to reconsider diaspora as inclusive of individuals living in the country of origin" (2012: 123). Citing James Clifford's "rejection of pure diaspora," Cannon argues that music provides a medium for individuals of various ages and backgrounds in both Vietnam and abroad to interact.

Scholars have also considered how the Vietnamese state uses specific musical genres to represent the nation. In her study of *quan họ* folk singing of northern Vietnam, anthropologist Lauren Meeker demonstrates how singers navigate political and cultural expectations following UNESCO recognition of the genre as a form of intangible cultural heritage (2013). Considering the relationship between music and cultural politics, ethnomusicologist Barley Norton has traced the history of *chầu văn* spirt possession rituals within the context of state control of the arts (2009).

Ethnomusicologists have also analyzed the relationship between musical instruments and Vietnamese nationalism. Scholar and performer Lê Tuấn Hùng

focuses on the *đàn tranh* zither, tracing the influence of cultural politics on performance practices and repertoire (1998). Reviewing literature directed towards foreign tourists, ethnomusicologist Ingrid Bertleff has considered how đàn bầu is marketed internationally as a symbol of Vietnaemse culture (2006). The role of instruments in nationalist projects is not isolated to Vietnam. As the following section highlights, scholars have questioned the relationship between music and nationalism in other cultural contexts.

Ethnomusicological Literature on Musical Instruments and Nationalism

Ethnomusicologists have studied the role of musical instruments in nationalist projects across cultures. Some examples include Jeffrey Dyer's work on the Cambodian *kse diev* monochord (2016); Tanya Merchant's examination of women musicians and the *dutar* in Uzbekistan (2015); and Peter Marsh's analysis of the *morin huur* horse-head fiddle and Mongolian identity (2009); Jennifer Post's research on *dombra* lute performance in Kazakh diaspora communities in western Mongolia (2007); Donna Buchanan's work on the intersections of economy and national identity in Buglarian folk orchestras (2006); Christopher Goertzen's study of folk fiddling and national identity in Norway (1997); and Frederick Lau's research on the *dizi* repertoire in China (1996). In considering the đàn bầu as an "archive" of information about Vietnamese cultural history, I draw on the work of ethnomusicologist Megan Rancier (2014). Focusing on the Kazakh two-stringed horsehair fiddle *qul-qobyz,* Rancier examines the idea of a musical instrument as an "archive" of cultural meanings that, when interpreted through the act of

performance, contribute to a larger social discourses of music and meaning. In particular, Rancier connects the various, ever-evolving musical meanings assigned to the qul-qobyz to larger narratives of Kazakh national identity. Similarly, the đàn bầu is the locus of continually shifting articulations of Vietnamese identity in the home country and in its diasporas.

The work of ethnomusicologist Frederick Lau is particularly useful when focusing on how specific instruments relate to nationalist discourse. In his article "Forever Red: The Invention of Solo *Dizi* Music in Post-1949 China," Lau connects historian Eric Hobsbawm's theory of invented tradition to 20th century socialist China, where—in order to facilitate a sense of national unity—party leaders used culture as a political tool. Lau's primary example is the dizi, a bamboo transverse flute, which, before the 1949 Revolution, did not have its own distinctly solo repertoire (1996). In my dissertation, I will unpack similar connections between nationalist discourse and music composition in the Vietnamese context, particularly regarding the đàn bầu.

Vietnamese musical nationalism is not geopolitically unique, but is rather part of larger epistemologies of the modern nation state. In *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition,* historian Janaki Bakhle demonstrates the role of Indian nationalism in the development of *khayal,* a genre conceptualized as North Indian classical music. As nhạc dân tộc hiện đại elides ethnic histories to create a pan-Vietnamese musical identity, early musicologists writing on khayal were, Bakhle describes, invested in the "attempt to write a musicological, theoretical, and religious nationalism over the bodies, practices, and

histories of music's practitioners," namely the *gharanha* or hereditary musicians, primarily Sunni Muslim men, who had played this music for centuries (2005: 6). In Vietnam, the state promotes the genre of nhạc dân tộc hiện đại to musically represent a Vietnamese past through contemporary idioms (e.g., arrangements of folk songs for orchestras of traditional instruments). As with Vietnamese nationalism and nhạc dân tộc hiện đại, musicological discourse concerning khayal worked to stabilize and legitimize the cultural history of India. Although the circumstances and histories of European colonization in Vietnam and India are different, musicologists of both geopolitical areas recognized the importance of establishing a national musical identity, made legible by a connection to the past (a musical lineage), a unified and universally implemented pedagogy, and a set musical canon.

Ethnomusicologists Tanya Merchant (2015) and Juniper Hill (2009) have both discussed the impact of Western art music pedagogy and value systems within traditional music pedagogy in state conservatory frameworks in Uzbekistan and Finland, respectively. In his work on blind Chinese folk musician Abing (1893-1950), ethnomusicologist Jonathan Stock examines multiple interpretations of Abing's life and work, connecting shifting political climates to changing aesthetic priorities (Stock 1996). Ethnomusicologist Judith Herd traces a history of modern music in Japan, noting how nationalist re-imaginings of the past—and a desire to distinguish Japanese music from Western art music—during times of political crisis shaped music aesthetics and pedagogy in state conservatories (Herd 2004).

My Contribution

Musical instruments contain layers of historical and cultural significance. While other English-language scholarship on Vietnamese music has focused on specific genres (Arana 1999; Norton 2009; Tran 2017) or individual artists (Wong 2004; Cannon 2012), this dissertation uses đàn bầu performance to question how the Vietnamese state has imbued a specific musical instrument with political significance. A history of the đàn bầu participates in larger conversations within the field of ethnomusicology concerning the role of musical instruments in nationalist historiographies. The đàn bầu offers particular insights into how musicians navigate cultural policies of the state and adapt to shifting economic and political expectations. Through its incorporation into state musical institutions in the twentieth century, the đàn bầu has value in Vietnam as a symbolic representation of an imagined Vietnamese past distinct from western and Chinese musical influence. Educated in state conservatories, professional đàn bầu musicians in Vietnam master the neotraditional repertoire promoted by the state. In the twenty-first century, musicians also navigate the economic landscape of post-reform Vietnam through performances for tourist audiences.

Through fieldwork in United States, Canada, and Australia, this dissertation contributes to ethnomusicological discourse about music in diaspora by questioning how the đàn bầu is a fulcrum around which Vietnamese musicians traverse audience expectations in a variety of contexts, performing culture for Vietnamese and western audiences. In the Vietnamese diaspora, the đàn bầu is a site where national identity is negotatied. Musicians are able to use the đàn bầu to express their

heritage while differentiating their work from Vietnamese state institutions. Additionally, composers in the diaspora actively experiment with new timbres and extended techniques for the đàn bầu, aurally distinguishing their music from performance in Vietnam.

Theoretical Perspectives

As a material symbol of Vietnamese national identity, the đàn bầu has both economic and political value in Vietnam and the diaspora. Philosopher Pierre Bourdieu explains that musical instruments are able to operate as "cultural capital." Discourse surrounding the aesthetic importance of cultural objects, he argues, grants these objects a seemingly inherent and natural value. "Cultural capital in its objectified state," Bourdieu notes, "presents itself with all the appearances of an autonomous, coherent universe which, although the product of historical action, has its own laws, transcending individual wills…" (Bourdieu 1986: 242). The value of the đàn bầu as a symbl of Vietnamese culture is not coincidental, but the result of a continued discourse surrounding the instrument as an icon of the nation.

In *Invented Traditions,* historian Eric Hobsbawm considers the "powerful ritual complex" comprising the material considerations of tradition (1996: 6). In musical performance, material considerations include the construction of concert halls and other performance spaces, adapting instruments for performance in these spaces, and standardizing uniforms or codes for performance dress. These material considerations are not fixed, but change over time and depending on performance context. Regarding Vietnamese traditional music performance, one must consider

when and how performance dress is chosen to reflect "Vietnam" (e.g., the traditional áo dài dress) and how instruments, such as the đàn bầu, connect to dialogues of tradition.

Political scientist Benedict Anderson draws upon Hobswam's ideas in his 1983 book *Imagined Communities,* in which Anderson connects the rise of the modern nation state in the 20th century to cultural changes—in technology, geography, literature and journalism—which reflected changing conceptions of space and time in human thought. My work asks how Hobsbawm and Anderson's theories of tradition and imagined community operate in a diasporic context. What other purposes, besides nationalist agendas, may tradition serve?

In his reading of Hobsbawm, historian Ronald Grigor Suny implicates scholars in the construction of teleological narratives of the nation. "They revive, refine, and pass down rhetoric, symbols, and rituals that soon appear to have a naturalness and authenticity that originates deep in history and possesses clear legitimacy for the future" (10). Academic institutions, as instruments of the state, support these teleological narratives. In Vietnam, state conservatories and the Vietnamese Institute for Musicology promote the đàn bầu as a symbol of Vietnamese culture rooted in the past, developed in the present through amplification and organological changes, and poised to represent the nation in the future. Asserting the Vietnamese origins of the đàn bầu, these institutions "revive" and "refine" performance through the standardization of pedagogy and techniques. Incorporated into state folk orchestras, the đàn bầu becomes part of the larger political project of musical nationalism.

Separated from these state institutions in the Vietnamese diaspora, however, narratives surrounding the đàn bầu as a national instrument shift to reflect localized priorities. Arguing that the "discourse of diaspora will necessarily be modified as it is translated and adapted," historian James Clifford postulates that technologies, transportation, and shifting political climates continuously shape lived experiences of diaspora communities (1994: 304, 306). In the Vietnamese diaspora, the đàn bầu is a symbol of national identity and cultural pride. Yet as I observed in performances in northern California, musicians celebrate Vietnamese heritage with the đàn bầu while consciously separating the instrument from the modern nation state of Vietnam. The cultural history of the đàn bầu also complicates the idea of diaspora as an ontologically stable category, as musicians in Vietnam and around the world communicate and collaborate.

Methodology

My fieldwork with Vietnamese musical communities began in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2015. Concert attendance formed a significant portion of ethnography for the first year of my research, during which I began to meet future collaborators and understand the ways audiences and participants relate musical performance to the expression of Vietnamese-American identities in California. The third and fourth annual "Thi Ca & Sử Việt" (Vietnamese Arts and History) Festivals in San Francisco, organized by the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco in 2015 and 2016 provided important insight into the northern California diaspora community.

In 2015, I began đàn bầu lessons with Vũ Hồng Thịnh in San Jose, California.[11] An ethnomusicologist and professional musician, Mr. Thịnh moved to San Jose from Ho Chi Minh City in 2000. From his home studio, Mr. Thịnh teaches a variety of Vietnamese instruments (đàn bầu**,** đàn tranh zither, and đàn nguyệt two string lute) and western instruments (piano, guitar, and mandolin) as well as music theory and composition lessons. In early 2017, I also began to study đàn nguyệt with Mr. Thịnh.

My fieldwork in Vietnam took place during two trips. From September to November 2015, I spent one month in Hanoi and one month in Ho Chi Minh City, gathering information about the đàn bầu and about the traditional music scenes in Vietnam's two largest urban areas. At that time, I was not affiliated with a Vietnamese institution or with a particular teacher. This "freelance" research approach had marked advantages and disadvantages. The lack of institutional affiliation meant I could establish contacts independently and arrange interviews through teachers and friends in the California diaspora. I quickly discovered that personal connections held as much (if not more) importance as institutional affiliations. Furthermore, without an institutional agenda, I was at liberty to meet a variety of musicians of different traditions and backgrounds, from đàn bầu students to *đờn ca tài tử* lyricists and from conservatory professors to former radio musicians.

Occasionally during fieldwork, I attempted to connect with musicians with whom I did not share a mutual contact. In these instances, my subject position as an American university researcher provided a certain privilege. As I will discuss later,

[11] The Arts Dean's Fund for Excellence at the University of California, Santa Cruz supported fieldwork in the Bay Area during summer 2015.

the attention of foreign ethnomusicologists on various musical genres in Vietnam is part of a larger narrative of cultural preservation and Vietnamese nationalism. Most simply, the attention of a foreigner to Vietnamese music demonstrated the international prestige of this music. After a concert in Hanoi's Old Quarter, I met Nguyễn Xuân Hoạch, a respected elder musician and a proponent of the acoustic đàn bầu, one of his primary instruments. From Mr. Hoạch, I gained insight into a bourgeoning historically informed performed practice movement in Hanoi.

I returned to Vietnam from May to July 2016.[12] The majority of this trip was spent in Hanoi, following up with đàn bầu musicians I had met the previous fall, including Nguyễn Xuân Hoạch. In Hanoi, I also studied đàn bầu three times a week with Mr. Phạm Kim Thành, a retired professor from the National Academy of Music in Hanoi. One of the Vietnam National Music School's first students, he began to study đàn bầu and traditional music theory at the Music School as a young student in 1973. Resuming his studies after the American War, he completed a Bachelor's degree in đàn bầu performance in 1986. In my lessons with Mr. Thành, I had the opportunity to engage more directly with đàn bầu pedagogy in the Vietnamese conservatory system.

Throughout 2016 and 2017, I continued fieldwork with the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center, attending community events such as the Tết lunar New Year celebration, Vietnamese Art and History Festival, and a commemoration event for the forty-second anniversary of the Fall of Saigon. Through regular attendance at community celebrations, I became familiar with members of the Âu Cơ Center and

[12] A Dissertation Quarter Sabbatical grant from the University of California, Santa Cruz funded research during spring 2016.

had the opportunity to volunteer in community events. On two occasions I gave guest presentations at the Âu Cơ Center's Saturday language school, discussing my graduate studies on the đàn bầu and trips to Vietnam with groups of high school students. At the 2016 Southeast Asian Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival, Âu Cơ organizer Ms. Hang Le To invited me to participate musically, by presenting đàn bầu demonstrations throughout the afternoon. This allowed me to contribute to the community from whom I had learned a great deal and also provided insights into the organizational structure of the center. Performing the đàn bầu at the Southeast Asian Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival also led me to question the stakes of performing Vietnamese music as a non-heritage musician (i.e., a "westerner").

In addition to fieldwork in northern California in 2017, I also communicated with musicians in Canada and Australia for broader perspectives on the Vietnamese diaspora. Unable to travel to these two countries, I corresponded with musicians over email and via Skype. This digital fieldwork contributes to a larger understanding of how diaspora musicians in various geo-political locations use the đàn bầu to express personal and cultural identities.

This fieldwork with Vietnamese musicians and communities in 2015-2017 informs the central arguments of this dissertation. My research indicates that in Vietnam and its diaspora, the đàn bầu is a symbol of national and cultural identity. Vietnamese state institutions, individual musicians, and audiences contribute to a discourse connecting the đàn bầu with an imagined Vietnamese past. Throughout the twentieth century, state music academies institutionalized the đàn bầu, standardizing pedagogy and performance to support a nationalist musical

repertoire. This neotraditional music articulates contemporary political concerns through references to the past. The đàn bầu also plays a vital role in music making in the diaspora. In Canada, Australia, and the United States, musicians use the đàn bầu to reflect and celebrate their cultural heritage while stratetically distinguishing performace practices from the state of Vietnam. In northern California, Vietnamese musicians are beginning to explore how the đàn bầu can heal divisions within the community, bringing northern and southern Vietnamese audience members together to share a common musical heritage.

Orthographic Considerations

Vietnamese is a tonal language with six tones. Written Vietnamese (*quốc ngữ* or "national language") uses the Latin alphabet with a series of diacritical marks indicating vowel pronunciation and tone. Quốc ngữ gained wide usage in the early twentieth century, replacing a system of Chinese and Sino-Vietnamese characters (Arana 1999:26).[13] All Vietnamese words in this dissertation are spelled using diacritics except when I use the Anglicized version of place names (e.g., "Vietnam" instead of *Việt Nam*, "Hanoi" instead of *Hà Nội*, and "Ho Chi Minh City" instead of *Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh*). When referring to Vietnamese authors and sources, I have used diacritic marks when the authors do so in their published works.

I have also made orthographic considerations when referring to my interlocutors. Throughout my interactions with Vietnamese musicians and audience members, I have used the customary titles of the Vietnamese language dependent

[13] For a guide to Vietnamese pronunciation, see Bac Hoai Tran 2010.

on the interlocutor's gender and age relevant to my own as well as our relationship. Additionally, in Vietnamese, it is customary to address someone by his or her first, rather than last name. For example, I address male interlocutors approximately 5-15 years older than me as "*anh La"* or "older brother La" and a woman of the same age as "*chị* Thủy*"* or "older sister Thủy." I address female teachers as "*cô*" and a male teacher as "*thầy*." When referring to my interlocutors in this dissertation, I have replaced their Vietnamese titles with their approximate English language equivalents (Mr. or Ms.) in order to demonstrate my respect for these individuals while also considering readers unfamiliar with the Vietnamese language.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter two examines the history of the đàn bầu from its origin legends through the end of the Second World War. Following a discussion of the acoustic đàn bầu xẩm, it discusses how technological developments to the instrument allowed for its incorporation into musical institutions. By drawing on French archival materials, Vietnamese oral histories, and early recordings, it connects narratives of the đàn bầu's past with twentieth century discourse positioning the đàn bầu as the national instrument of Vietnam.

Chapter three discusses the history of the đàn bầu and musical life in Vietnam during the wars of 1954-1975. Highlighting the complex relationships between politics, conflict, and the arts, it demonstrates the myriad ways music was a form of propaganda and as a method of creative expression in wartime Vietnam. In

this analysis I draw on Vietnamese song texts and oral histories as well as Vietnamese and English language secondary sources.

Chapter four focuses on the role of the Vietnamese state in đàn bầu performance since 1975. In this discussion, I connect the cultural politics of the Communist Party of Vietnam to musical life. This chapter argues that the state actively promotes the đàn bầu as a symbol of a Vietnamese national culture through the institutionalization of music.

Chapter five is an analysis of musical tourism in contemporary Vietnam. I discuss how the strategies and vocabularies of musical performances directed towards tourists both foreign and domestic influence the ways that tourist audiences interact with an imagined Vietnamese history. This chapter uses Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" to question the ways in which the đàn bầu functions as a material and aural symbol of Vietnamese culture. In my discussion, I draw on three case studies: a đàn bầu performance in Hội An Ancient Town (a UNESCO-recognized World Heritage Site); a performance of the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater in Hanoi; and a private music tour hosted by Mr. Hoàng Anh, a đàn bầu musician in Ho Chi Minh City.

Chapter six looks at music making in the Vietnamese diaspora and how musicians and audiences use the đàn bầu to perform a Vietnamese cultural identity distinguished from the current political order of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In this chapter, I highlight the work of two đàn bầu artists, Hoàng Ngọc Bích in Canada and Đặng Kim Hiền in Australia, to examine how the đàn bầu reflects express intersecting cultural, personal, and national identities.

Chapter seven focuses on the đàn bầu in Vietnamese-American communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. Tension exists in the American diaspora between southern Vietnamese and more recent, northern Vietnamese immigrants. Music is one way to heal these divisions, as evidenced by the work of Vietnamese-American musician Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ. As an institution in the Vietnamese diaspora, the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center uses the đàn bầu as a symbol to articulate personal and political priorities surrounding identity, community, and artistic expression.

Chapter eight, the concluding chapter, synthesizes these arguments, asserting that đàn bầu performance is a site in which intersecting definitions of Vietnamese identity are voiced and challenged. In the diaspora, đàn bầu performance is the intersection of complex political and personal conceptualizations of Vietnamese nationalism.

Chapter Two. From the Streets to the Concert Stage: A History of the Đàn Bầu Monochord in Vietnam to 1945

According to Vietnamese legend, the first đàn bầu was a divine reward for the loyalty and sacrifice of a young woman. In the distant past, a young wife left home in search of her soldier husband, missing at the front. Accompanied by her mother-in-law, she faced the dangers of the road including thieves, sickness, and hunger. Along their journey, the two women are invited to dine in a village along their route. They accept, but unbeknownst to the travelers, this village practiced the unique custom of offering human eyeballs in ritual sacrifice once a year. In exchange for their hospitality, the villagers asked one of the women to give her eyes for the ritual. The young woman, not wanting her mother-in-law to make this sacrifice, offered her own eyes instead (Midori 2004). A magical fairy saw the young woman's brave sacrifice and was moved with compassion. The magic fairy gave the woman a musical instrument that closely resembled the human voice: a đàn bầu monochord. Not only did the instrument help the young woman play lovely music—for both her own comfort and to win monetary favors from passers-by—but as a magic object, the instrument also led the young woman to her husband (Nguyễn Xuàn Khóat 1960: 31-32).

Taking on an aura of magic, the đàn bầu itself becomes a symbol of sacrifice rewarded, a physical testament to the strength of the Vietnamese character. This origin story also works as an allegory for marital fidelity, modeling the obedient and selfless behavior expected of women in traditional Vietnamese society. In the

legend, a magic fairy gives the monochord to a Vietnamese woman in the "distant past," emphasizing that the đàn bầu is of Vietnamese origin (ibid). These stories thus reflect contemporary dialogue about the đàn bầu as a national instrument representative of Vietnamese culture.

Along with these origin tales, Vietnamese scholars draw upon court documents and oral histories to craft a history of the đàn bầu. These histories assert the Vietnamese origins of the instrument in order to emphasize the đàn bầu's status as a national instrument. In this chapter I trace the early history of the đàn bầu monochord beginning with the nineteenth century *đàn bầu xẩm*, an acoustic monochord traditionally performed by blind musicians (*xẩm*) among others.[14] After discussing the organology of đàn bầu xẩm, I highlight the social role of the xẩm musicians and situate and compare this history within the larger context of blind musicians in Central, Southeast, and East Asian cultures. I then trace the movement of the đàn bầu from north to south.

Moving to the twentieth century, I discuss how new technologies and the availability of synthetic materials radically changed đàn bầu construction and performance. While the availability of electronic amplification and steel strings increased the volume and timbre of the instrument, I argue that these organological changes also re-framed the đàn bầu within a larger Vietnamese cultural discourse.

[14] Some scholars speculate the instrument could date from the thirteenth century, pointing to a description of a monochord from the Tran Dynasty (Nguyễn Thụy Loan 1993: 25; Nguyễn Viêm 1996: 86; Phong T. Nguyễn 1998: 471). Other historians indicate a nineteenth century court document that mentions a monochord performance in the year 1770 (Thompson n.d.; Phong T. Nguyễn 1998: 471). No direct evidence exists, however, to suggest that these monochords were a historical precedent to the đàn bầu as it is known today.

With the rise of Vietnamese nationalist movements in the early twentieth century, the đàn bầu, a distinctly Vietnamese instrument with humble origins, was uniquely poised as musical symbol of the Vietnamese nation.

The đàn bầu xẩm

Similar in construction to the contemporary đàn bầu, the đàn bầu xẩm consists of a silk string, stretched over a split bamboo tube. Musicians requiring a louder sound from the acoustic đàn bầu xẩm would place the body of the instrument on a hollowed trunk to act as a larger resonating body (Gibbs 1996: 15). An undated French postcard, likely from the early 20th century, features a photograph of two musicians, one playing the đàn bầu xẩm and the other playing the đàn nhị two string spike fiddle (see figure 2.1). The caption reads "Tonkin. –Musiciens aveugles" indicating that the photograph of "blind musicians" was taken in northern Vietnam. As captured in the photograph, to play the đàn bầu xẩm, musicians used a thin wooden stick, longer than the bamboo plectrum used today. Whereas the handle of the contemporary đàn bầu is perpendicular to the body of the instrument, the handle of the đàn bầu xẩm sharply curved in towards the player. Seated on a bamboo mat, a đàn bầu xẩm musician held the instrument in place by laying the right leg over the body of the instrument. Other items in the photograph include two flat drums, a wood block, and an empty bowl, likely for collecting alms from passers-by.

Figure 2.1: Early 20th century French postcard featuring the đàn bầu xẩm and đàn nhị. Postcard from the private collection of David Murray and used with permission.

As the above postcard suggests, blind musicians (*xẩm* or *hát xẩm*) continued to play the đàn bầu xẩm into the twentieth century (in Vietnamese, "xẩm" literally means "blind"). Trần Văn Khê, attributes the spread of the instrument throughout the Vietnamese peninsula to a group of traveling blind singers from northern Vietnam who traveled to the imperial capital of Huế in 1896 (1962: 134). At the court, King Thành Thái appreciated the đàn bầu and incorporated the instrument into court music. Musicians in Huế later brought the instrument to other regions, including Saigon and the southern provinces. This musical migration included musicians who played ca Huế, a form of improvised chamber music that includes the đàn bầu. Resettling in the southern provinces, these musicians began to play *hát bội*

classical theater and *nhạc lễ* ritual music.[15] These collaborations gradually led to the new genres *cải lương* theater and *nhạc tài tử Nam bộ*, the amateur chamber music characteristic of southern Vietnam (for more detail, see Cannon 2012: 126).

Written records of the xẩm musicians are sparse before the colonial era, but Vietnamese oral histories describe the xẩm as itinerant musicians and storytellers (Nguyễn Xuàn Khóat 1960: 32; VietNamNet 2016; Hoàng Ngọc Bích 2017). Xẩm used the đàn bầu to accompany their tales as traveling storytellers and to provide entertainment at festivals and village parties. Musicologist and composer Phạm Duy identifies xẩm as "blind troubadors who sang on the road to earn bread," historically performing hát xẩm "peddlers' songs" in northern Vietnam accompanied by a monochord, fiddle, drum, and castanets (1975: 85-86). Xẩm musicians were at the center of public life, sharing current events in satirical songs or regaling crowds at the marketplace with tales from popular legends.

Blind musicians are not a historical phenomenon unique to Vietnam. Historian Gerald Groemer's work on blind musicians during the *Tokugawa* period in Japan (1600-1868) explores the role of the *tōdō-za* blind musicians association in Koto that supported new compositions for *biwa* lute and *shamisen* flute. Tōdō-za musicians actively sought to distance themselves from iterant performers and

[15] Hát bội (also known as hát tuồng in northern Vietnam) is a form of musical theater dating to the 13th century Lê dynasty. Music is an integral aspect of hát bội. Singers use different vocal techniques to comment upon the emotional content of each piece. An instrumental ensemble typically includes a section of chordophones (including a đàn bầu, a *đàn tam* three-string lute, and a *đàn nhị* two-string spike fiddle), aerophones (especially the a *kèn* oboe) and an array of percussion instruments (Duy 1975: 113-126, Nguyễn 2008: 274). Nhạc lễ is a form of ceremonial music in southern Vietnam accompanying funerals, weddings, and village festivals. Nhạc lễ orginated in temple festivals in southern Vietnam during the 1600s (Nguyễn 1998: 505).

claimed linage to aristocratic families (Groemer 2001: 351). Vietnamese oral histories do not suggest that xẩm musicians organized into similar guilds. Ethnomusicologist Hugh de Ferranti investigates the role of blind musicians in the narrative *zatô biwa* genre of Japan, highlighting the work of one of the last surviving *zatô* musicians, Ôkawa Susumu (2003). Although zatô biwa performance declined in the twentieth century, musicians continue to perform this repertoire through a combination of oral tradition (transmitted from Ôkawa Susumu) and written records.

Similar to the zatô biwa revival, a group of musicians in Vietnam are invested in performing historically informed hát xẩm repertoire drawing on oral histories and early twentieth century recordings. The leader of the Ancient Music Group of Tonkin is Nguyễn Xuân Hoạch, a respected elder musician in Hanoi who builds acoustic instruments in his home workshop, including a *đàn bầu xẩm*. Mr. Hoạch's workshop and performances will be described in detail in subsequent chapters. Notably, acoustic đàn bầu performance has not disappeared, but continues to be strategically performed today as part of a larger narrative of Vietnamese musical history.

Throughout the twentieth century, new technologies influenced đàn bầu performance. Recordings from the early twentieth century provide insight into đàn bầu repertoire and techniques before musicians adopted began to amplify their instruments. The following section considers the history and implications of both technologies on the đàn bầu.

Twentieth Century Technologies and the Đàn Bầu

Recording Technology

Following the invention of the phonograph in 1877, western record companies began to commercialize recordings for home entertainment. As the private ownership of phonographs grew in the early twentieth century, a variety of companies gramophone companies including Columbia, Pathé, Beka, Odéon expanded their reach globally, traveling throughout Asia, North Africa, and Central and South America to make recordings. Tracing the history of the phonograph in early twentieth century Egypt, ethnomusicologist Ali Jihad Racy notes that these recordings were marketed to Egyptian consumers, evidenced by advertisements in newspapers for stores selling the latest discs (1976: 23-24). In his survey of record companies early pursuits in Southeast Asia, ethnomusicologist Pekka Gronow notes that Indochina was one of French record company Pathé's largest markets from 1900-1010 (1981: 264-266).

Longing for the Past: The 78 RPM Era in Southeast Asia collects these recordings as part of a recently published 4 CD-set featuring recordings made from the 1900s-1960s in Southeast Asia. This collection includes two recordings of the đàn bầu. The first "Nam Nhị-Tự" or ""Nam Nhi Tự" ("A Great Man"), recorded circa 1930, is a performance by Nguyễn Văn Minh also known as Minh-Con or "Minh Junior" (Gibbs et al. 2013). A sticker on the 78 record advertises a record shop on Hàng Bông Street in Hanoi's Old Quarter, suggesting this was a recording marketed towards Vietnamese listeners. The đàn bầu player in this recording, Nguyễn Văn Minh, ornaments the structural melody with several elaboration techniques,

including *rung* vibrato and *vo*, series of quick, slight ascending grace notes. Nguyễn Văn Minh also elaborates key notes in the mode with slurred mordents and inverse mordents. Due to this ornamentation style, Vietnamese musician and scholar Bùi Trọng Hiền identifies this recording of "A Great Man" as being played in the style of a Huế musician, otherwise identified as the southern style (Nam) style.

Another recording included in the *Longing for the Past* collection that features the đàn bầu is “Đờn Huế, Cổ Bản” (“Huế Instrumental, Ancient Piece”), recorded in 1931. This record, produced by Beka record company, lists the performers as: Cậu Tôn Út (Youngest Uncle Tôn), đờn bầu; Cậu Quế (Uncle Quế), đờn nhị; and Cậu Ba (Uncle Three), đờn nguyệt. Here, “đờn” is an alternative spelling of “đàn,” indicating an instrument is a string instrument. “Đờn Huế” and “Cổ Bản” are examples of instrumental music from Huế, the former imperial capital of Vietnam. As Jason Gibbs notes, musicians who played this type of music in Huế were typically court officials, adapting ceremonial and entertainment music from court for instrumental performance. The đàn bầu player in this recording is Cậu Tôn Út or “Youngest Uncle Tôn,” “a very familiar and endearing way of addressing a young man,” Gibbs comments (2013: 149).

“Cổ Bản” is in the Bắc or northern mode, C-D-F-G-A. The “northern” mode designates China; therefore, Gibbs surmises that the piece is likely a Vietnamized adaptation of a Chinese melody (2013: 148). An example of instrumental music from Huế, “Cổ Bản” is an antecedent to nhạc tài tử, a style of improvised chamber music popular in southern Vietnam. As with nhạc tài tử, this recording begins with a *rao* or an improvised prelude that allows the musicians to acclimate to each other’s

tuning. The *song lang* clapper (most likely played by the đờn nguyệt player) signals the beginning of the composed melody. While each musician is playing his own ornamented version of the melody, each interpretation lines up on main structural notes, signaled by the song lang. The đàn bầu musician in this recording, Cậu Tôn Út or Youngest Uncle Tôn, plays less elaborate ornamentations, primarily emphasizing the basic melodic notes. The musician's choice to play less elaborate ornamentation could also be due to the characteristics of the đàn bầu itself. Ornamentation on the đàn bầu, especially the acoustic đàn bầu, tends to be softer and so it could be difficult for the musician to be heard over the other two instruments.

Amplification

Musicians typically date the amplification of the đàn bầu to the early 1950s. During the Second World War, Japanese forces controlled the Indochinese peninsula. Multi-instrumentalist Vanessa Vân-Ánh Võ explains that the đàn bầu was first amplified using loudspeakers left behind by Japanese soldiers. Musicians noticed that these loudspeakers could be used to amplify previously acoustic instruments (Vanessa Vân-Ánh Võ, UCSC Colloquium, March 17, 2014). The exact date for amplification of is unknown. However, this altered đàn bầu performance practice significantly.

With the resulting increase in volume from electronic amplification, the đàn bầu could perform in larger and louder spaces—including concert halls and auditoriums. Before amplification, đàn bầu players could only perform with one or two other instruments of similar volume. For example, in the 1931 recording of "Đờn Huế, Cổ Bản," the đàn bầu is played along with two other chordophones: a đàn

nguyệt two-string lute and a đàn nhị two-string spike fiddle. Once amplified, the đàn bầu could perform with larger groups, which resulted in its inclusion in nhạc tài tử amateur chamber music ensembles and hát bội theater ensembles.

Although musicians may have begun to amplify the đàn bầu with Japanese loudspeakers after 1945, electric đàn bầu did not gain popularity until the 1960s. According to my San Jose-based đàn bầu teacher Vũ Hồng Thịnh, the first musician in his lineage of teachers to play an amplified đàn bầu was Manh Thắng, in 1960 (as corroborated by Phạm Phúc Minh 1999: 61). As amplifiers and steel strings became more readily available in Vietnam the electric đàn bầu gradually replaced the acoustic đàn bầu xẩm.

Music During the French Colonial Era (1860-1954)

As outlined in the introduction, Vietnam underwent a period of French colonial rule beginning in the late 19th century. The colony of French Indochine or Indochina combined three distinct territories (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos) as one political territory. This unification ignored linguistic and cultural divisions and longstanding border disputes between Cambodia and Vietnam. Regardless of these divisions, Indo-Chine became a unified territory, *l'Union indochinoise,* in 1887, dividing the Vietnamese peninsula into three sections: Tonkin in the north, Annam in the center, and Cochinchina in the south (Cooper 2001).

French colonization brought western music to the Vietnamese peninsula. By 1885, semi-professional European theaters were established, with the Théâtre Municipale de Hànôi founded in 1911. Along with theater performances, the cinema

brought music from French films to an even wider audience. Western-style musical education for non-European inhabitants in urban centers was relatively rare during the colonial period. Musicologist Michael McClellan details the history of the short-lived Conservatoire d'Extrémè-Orient (Conservatory of the Far East), established in 1927 to teach western music (2009). The colonial government subsidized the institution as part of a larger project to educate Indochinese subjects to become colonial workers, to address the financial strain of colonization and resulting labor crisis (ibid: 320). Financial difficulties in colonial Vietnam closed the conservatory in 1930. The peninsula experienced a crippling economic depression throughout the 1930s, followed by the political and economic turmoil of Japanese occupation during the Second World War.

Outside of French musical institutions, Vietnamese musicians incorporated elements of western music into Vietnamese practices. Jason Gibbs explains how the advent of spoken-word Vietnamese theater (kịch nói), influenced by the French stage, led to the development of a new form of Vietnamese musical theater, *cải lương* (2002, 2003). As the development of a Latin Vietnamese script, quốc ngữ, facilitated the translation of French novels into Vietnamese, French stories increasingly became a source for new Vietnamese language theater. Furthermore, when journalist and translator Nguyễn Văn Vình visited the Marseilles Colonial Exposition in 1906, he returned to home to write a series of articles arguing for the modernization of Vietnamese theater, including the adoption of the proscenium arch stage (Gibbs 2000: 2.)

While western musical performance in Indochina was relatively limited to French audiences and Indochinese elites, melodies such as the French national anthem, "La Marseillaise," required at all public schools and events, were familiar to a large audience and thus incorporated into Vietnamese-language plays as musical interludes. Previously, all theater in Vietnam was musical theater, and audiences still expected a certain amount of musical performances in each production (ibid: 4). In response to these expectations, Vietnamese composers began to write adaptations of French melodies for Vietnamese lyrics or "bài ta theo điệu Tay" (or "our lyrics following Western melodies") (Gibbs 2003: 70). Outside of theater music, Vietnamese composers wrote popular songs based on French melodies. Listeners referred to these new songs as *nhạc cải cách* or reformed music. Throughout the early twentieth century, many nhạc cải cách compositions were love songs as well as nationalist songs. Many of these nationalist songs featured traditional melodies with new, patriotic lyrics.

After the end of the Second World War in 1945, Vietnamese nationalist movements, including the Việt Minh coalition, pushed for an independence from France. Throughout the subsequent war with France (1946-1954), nhạc cải cách became an increasingly politicized genre, with composers writing anthems for Vietnamese nationalist movements. Along with western-influenced popular songs, western notation and the conservatory system of musical education more broadly played an important political role in the establishment of Vietnamese musical institutions throughout the twentieth century. In North Vietnam, the Vietnamese Communist Party (influenced by cultural policies in China and the USSR) established

musical institutions to develop a new genre of neotraditional music to promote a distinctive Vietnamese cultural identity. Based in western musical idioms, this neotraditional music used Vietnamese musical instruments, and the đàn bầu in particular, to cultivate a new tradition.

Chapter Three. "Remember to Call Me Home": Music, Memory, and War in Vietnam, 1946-1975

> "…all wars are fought twice, the first time on the battlefield, the second time in memory. Any war could prove this claim, but the one that serves personally as a metonym for the problem of war and memory is what some call the Vietnam and others call the American War. The conflicting names indicate how this war suffers from an identity crisis, by the question of how it shall be known and remembered." (Viet Thanh Nguyen 2016: 4)

In *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War,* Vietnamese American author Viet Thanh Nguyen explores the politics and ethics of remembering and forgetting, beginning with the observation that wars continue well after the last shot is fired in a continuing battle over memory. Examining depictions of the war between the United States and Vietnam created on both sides of the Pacific—from films and novels to documentaries and memorials—Viet Thanh Nguyen works towards a "complex ethics of memory," understanding how the war continues in the public imagination (2016: 12). Confronting the memories of war is often an uncomfortable endeavor. But the physical and psychic remnants of nearly a century of continual warfare echo throughout Vietnam and its diaspora.

Musical histories of wartime Vietnam play a vital role in this framework of remembering and forgetting. In this chapter, I examine the complex relationships between politics, war, and the arts in Vietnam during the conflicts of 1945-1975. Musicians negotiate how the wars of the twentieth century "shall be known and remembered" through đàn bầu performance, using the instrument as a political tool, as a method of propaganda, and as an act of hope in a sharply divided society. I

begin this chapter with an overview of the First Indochina War of 1946-1954, noting the important role of Vietnamese nationalism to all parties in the conflict. Building upon this historical context, I then focus on the musical history of *tân nhạc* or "new music" songs that became patriotic anthems during the war, fueling nationalist fervor. Connecting the political events of the French Indochina War to the aftermath of the Geneva Accords of 1954, I outline the historical progression of the war between North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the United States. I then focus on the connection between music and the sounds of war in Vietnamese recollections of the war years. Moving from the local and regional frame of individual memory, I then focus on the broad, national cultural landscapes of North and South Vietnam by highlighting the role of state musical institutions in forming a new, "neotraditional" pan-Vietnamese musical identity. This chapter answers Viet Thanh Nguyen's call towards a "complex ethics of memory" through an analysis of how Vietnamese musical memories of violence, sacrifice, and patriotic duty continue to frame histories of war in the public imagination.

Setting the Stage for Independence: The Anti-French Resistance War, 1946-1954

Following the end of the Second World War in 1945, the peninsula faced an uncertain future. The defeat of Vichy France in 1944 had destabilized French colonial control of Indochina. Famine during the winter of 1944-1945 had led to the death of approximately one million Vietnamese in Tonkin and northern Annam. Japanese military politices exacerbated the famine during the last year of the war,

leading to a strong anti-Japanese sentiment (Taylor 2013: 532). An increasing lack of Vietnamese support along with an inevitable defeat in the Pacific led Japanese forces to begin a de-escalation of the Indochinese occupation. In March 1945, Japan declared Vietnam independent and re-established a royal government in Huế, preparing to transfer political power to the former emperor, Bao Dai. However, various regional political groups vied for power, threatening the monarchy. One of the strongest organizations was the Indochinese Communist Party and its Viet Minh front organization, led by Hồ Chí Minh (1890-1969). Throughout 1946, Hồ Chí Minh and the French colonial government negotiated the status of colonial Indochina. However, following a series of failed negotiations, fighting broke out between the Viet Minh and French military.

The First Indochina War or the Anti-French Resistance War began in earnest on December 19, 1946 with the Battle of Hanoi. While the Viet Minh gained power in the north, the French government hurried to organize an alternative political party, built on a patriotic Vietnamese spirit but still pro-French. In November of 1947, France recognized Bảo Đại's government, based in Saigon, as the official ruling state of Vietnam. In 1950, the First Indochina War became a Cold War conflict, with the Soviet Union and China recognizing the Viet Minh and the United States and Great Britain supporting the French-backed Republic led by Bảo Đại (ibid.: 550). Faced with increasing domestic criticism of the war, France began to scale back operations in Indochina, granting independence to Laos and Cambodia in 1953. Amidst France's military de-escalation, a crushing defeat at Dien Bien Phu on May 8, 1954

ended the war (Lessard 2002: 404). Peace negotiations the following month, held in Geneva, would attempt to reconcile the two Vietnams.

Throughout the First Indochina War, both Bảo Đại's government and the Viet Minh utilized music to rally troops and to build patriotic fervor. The following section first analyzes how Viet Minh songs experienced a topical shift from a focus on the individual (with sentimental, poetic lyrics contemplating personal loss) to a focus on the cause more broadly (commemorating the sacrifices and political victories of the Viet Minh). I then examine two songs that framed the political ideologies on both sides of the conflict: the Viet Minh's "Tiến Quân Ca" and the anthem of Bảo Đại's republic "Tiếng Gọi Thanh Niên."

Music, Sacrifice, and Patriotism During the First Indochina War

As discussed in chapter two, Vietnamese artists in the 20th sought to create uniquely Vietnamese art forms, distinct from Western traditions. In doing so, however, these artists did not reject foreign influences entirely, but incorporated select aesthetics into Vietnamese idioms.[16] Along with new syncretic genres such as cải lương, a new form of popular music referred to as *nhạc cài cách* ("modernized music") or *tân nhạc* "new music," blended Western and Vietnamese aesthetics. These "modernized" songs, most often love ballads, were typically written in western staff notation, with performers improvising microtonal ornamentation characteristic of Vietnamese

[16] Musicologist Jason Gibbs has chronicled the history of western music in Vietnam in great detail. His article "The West's Songs, Our Songs: The Introduction and Adaptation of Western Popular Song in Vietnam before 1940" traces this history from the appearance of Roman Catholic liturgical music in the seventeenth century to the popularity of French *chanson* in the 1940s (2003/2004), while"How Does Hanoi Rock? The Way to Rock and Roll in Vietnam" (2008) examines the twentieth century popularity of rock music.

traditional vocal music. Musicians incorporated guitar, piano, and violin into tân nhạc bands, performing alongside Vietnamese instruments such as the đàn bầu. Instrumental arrangements these popular vocal songs were also common, with melodic changes made to suit the particular timbre of the instrument (P. Nguyen 2008: 284; Henry 2005).

Composers also wrote new songs to promote the Viet Minh cause. After 1945, the tone of tân nhạc songs became more explicitly political, emphasizing patriotism, duty, and the self-sacrifices of wartime. One of Vietnam's most famous composers, Phạm Duy (1921-2013), began to write songs expressing the hardships he witnessed as a young man touring Vietnam as with a traveling *cải lương* opera troupe from 1944-1945.[17] Phạm Duy wrote "Remembering the Wounded Soldier" (Nhớ người thương binh) in 1947 while traveling with a performing arts troupe associated with the Viet Minh. In 1968, Smithsonian Folkways issued a recording of the composer singing "The Wounded Soldier" on a collection of Vietnamese folk songs and original compositions by Phạm Duy.[18] According to the liner notes, the song "tells of a man leaving the girl he loves, to go to war (then the Viet Minh struggle against the French), and of his finally coming home after having lost an arm. His girl, whom he marries, loves him more than before, and he is honored in his village. He and his wife work the land and long for peace." (Addiss 1968) For this recording of "The Wounded Soldier," Phạm Duy is accompanied only by acoustic guitar. A slow ballad in duple meter, "The Wounded Soldier" honors the loyalty and

[17] Phạm Duy later turned away the Viet Minh, moving to Saigon before immigrating to the United States.
[18] While the album liner notes list the song as "The Wounded Soldier," a more appropriate translation is "Remembering the Wounded Soldier."

patriotism of the young girl. During the first verse, she thinks of the man she loves, working to grow rice to support the war effort: “In the afternoon on the green field/She grows rice for him to kill the enemy” (Chiều về, chiều về trên cánh đồng xanh, Có nàng gánh lúa cho anh ra đi giết thù). Singing of the green rice fields, Phạm Duy sings a syllabic melody, lightly strumming the guitar. This passage contrasts sharply with the second verse, in which the soldier loses his arm in battle. Here, Phạm Duy uses melisma and wide vibrato to convey the trauma and deep sadness of the event. In the final verse, however, the song ends with the soldier returning home to forget the battlefield but remember his fallen comrades (Phạm Duy 1968).

One of Phạm Duy’s early collaborators, composer Văn Cao (1923-1995), wrote a song that became the rallying cry Hồ Chí Minh’s August Revolution: “Tiến Quân Ca” or “March of the Troops.” Văn Cao wrote “Tiến Quân Ca” as a response to the suffering he witnessed in Hanoi during the famine of 1944-1945. Although Văn Cao, as a Hanoian, had not witnessed Viet Minh activity, he had read of their activity in the northern mountains in secret newspapers (Gibbs 2007: 142). Reflecting upon the potential of a revolutionary army, “Tiến Quân Ca” calls upon the Viet Minh to take back the country. The first verse of a 1944 version describes the violence of battle and the glory of victory:

> “Go, Viet Minh army, with one heart to rescue the nation,
> Even louder, footsteps echo on the rugged road.
> The flag, imprinted with victory’s blood, bears the nation’s soul.
> The sound of distant guns vies with our martial song;
> The road to glory is built upon our foes’ corpses.”
> (Translated in Gibbs 2007: 143)

In this first verse of “Tiến Quân Ca,” Văn Cao describes the approaching sights and sounds of war: the sound of marching soldiers’ footsteps; the national flag, covered in blood; distant gunfire; and the dead bodies of the Viet Minh’s enemies. Throughout this sonic and visual imagery, “Tiến Quân Ca” emerges as the rallying cry of the people, the “martial song” vying with the threat of approaching gunfire. Along with compelling lyrics, Văn Cao wrote a relatively simple, stepwise melody that Viet Minh soldiers and their supporters without musical training could easily sing.

Published in underground newspapers, “Tiến Quân Ca” quickly became popular with the Viet Minh. On August 17th, at a large rally celebrating the transfer of power from the Japanese to Bảo Đại’s monarchy, members of the Viet Minh staged a symbolic take-over. Minutes after the rally began, the Viet Minh took down the royal flag of Vietnam, replaced it with their own, and led the crowd in singing “Tiến Quân Ca.” The following day, the Viet Minh named “Tiến Quân Ca” the national anthem of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Gibbs 2007: 144, 145).

While “Tiến Quân Ca” was the rallying cry for the Viet Minh, Bảo Đại’s republic would need an anthem of its own. An advisor suggested another tân nhạc melody, "Tiếng Gọi Thanh Niên" or "A Call to Youth" by composer Lưu Hữu Phước (1921-1989). Lưu Hữu Phước, however, had become a communist and strongly objected to the use of his anthem by the Republic. Due to the composer’s political activities in Northern Vietnam, the government-sponsored contest in 1956 attempted to select an alternative anthem. While six songs were selected as finalists, the Republic was unable to select an alternative anthem. A government selection

committee chose a revised version of "Tiếng Gọi Thanh Niên" with revised lyrics to include Vietnamese of all ages and not just youth, later becoming the official anthem of the Republic as "Tiếng Gọi Công Dán," or "A Call to Citizens" (ibid: 149).

With the end of the First Indochina War in 1954, the peninsula would remain divided into two Vietnams, each with its own national anthem. In the North, "Tiến Quân Ca" remained the anthem of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, later becoming the national anthem of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam after 1975. In the South, Lưu Hữu Phước's "Citizens" became the national anthem of the Republic of Vietnam until the Fall of Saigon in 1975, the communist allegiance of the composer overlooked or forgotten. As I will discuss in subsequent chapters, in Vietnamese diaspora communities "Citizens" is often still sung as the national anthem, such as at gatherings of the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center in northern California. The following section traces the history of these two Vietnams from the peace accords ending the First Indochina War in 1954 through the following conflict, war with the United States.

The Geneva Accords of 1954 and the "American War"

In early June 1954, representatives of the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom convened negotiations in Geneva navigated to determine the future of Vietnamese independence. Officials from the United States, eager to prevent a Cold War crisis, pushed for the partition Vietnam into two countries. Negotiators drafted a treaty separating Vietnam at the 17th parallel: the communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North and the State of Vietnam in the south, governed by Prime

Minster Ngô Đình Diệm. To pacify concerns over the division of the country, a provision was included to assure future unification elections. As historian Keith Taylor notes, the Geneva Accords were a tenuous peace, with the French government hesitant to relinquish its influence (2013: 560). No government signed any part of the treaty except for the ceasefire agreement, signed by representatives of the French and Northern Vietnamese armies.

The Geneva agreement provided an open border period following partition in which Vietnamese could freely move from the north to the south or vice versa. Approximately eighty to ninety thousand Vietnamese living in the south traveled north via Soviet ships, including many young people migrating to pursue an education. Meanwhile, eight hundred thousand northern Vietnamese traveled south for political and religious reasons (ibid.: 563). During the colonial era, Catholics in northern Vietnam had greater access to western education due to their religion. Due to this educational privilege, Catholics had held more elite positions in French civil service than non-Catholic Vietnamese. Both the State of Vietnam and the United States government encouraged Catholic emigration south as an effort to undermine Ho Chi Minh's government, offering resettlement assistance (Elkind 2004: 993, 995).

The Geneva Accords led to a ceasefire, but not to the end of war. From 1956-1959, North Vietnam began to quietly rebuild communist cells in South Vietnam. In May 1959, the Central Committee of the Communist Party ratified Resolution Fifteen, the authorization of war to unify North and South Vietnam as one, communist country. Meanwhile, a communist coup in Laos in 1960, supported by

Northern Vietnam and the Soviet Union, provided a line of direct access for the North Vietnamese into South Vietnam for via a southwestern border with Laos. Building upon this situation, in December 1960 the Party took advantage of a tense diplomatic situation between the government in Saigon and the United States to found the People's Liberation Front for South Vietnam, known more commonly in English as "Viet Cong." (Taylor 2013: 574)

From 1954-1964, the United States provided financial and military assistance, considered a "soft" intervention. Tensions quickly escalated first following the American-backed assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963 and again in 1964 with the sinking of a US tanker in the Gulf of Tonkin, reportedly caused by the North Vietnamese. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, signed in August 1964, authorized US President Lyndon B. Johnson to unofficially declare war against North Vietnam (Kagan 2002: 78-79). A major turning point in the war was the Tet Offensive, led by the Viet Cong. The offensive targeted urban centers, including six cities and a number of provincial and district capitals. The Viet Cong were quickly defeated in every urban center except for Huế, where the siege lasted for one month. While the offensive had greatly cost the Viet Cong in terms of supplies and manpower, as well as strengthened the resolve of the South Vietnamese, the United States viewed the Tet Offensive as a major defeat. As images of bloodshed and destruction from Hue reached American television, popular opinion swung against the war.

After eight years of involvement in the conflict, the United States prepared to reduce its presence in Vietnam in 1973, a process known as the "Vietnamization" of the war. Without the military aid or financial backing from the United States, the

North Vietnamese army quickly gained the upper hand. In April 1975, the North Vietnamese army took Saigon, effectively ending the war (Taylor 2013: 593-613).

Along with the material remains of the war—from rivers polluted with the Agent Orange dioxin to landmines and shrapnel—Vietnamese music history bears witness to the traumas of war. Musicians' and audiences' musical recollections of the war are a part of the aural memories of wartime Vietnam.

"Let Our Songs Drown the Bomb Explosions": Music Making in Wartime Vietnam

As US involvement escalated the conflict between North and South Vietnam, it interrupted daily life in Vietnam. In Hanoi, the government evaculated large sections of the city during the height of US bombing, with Hanoians seeking shelter in the countryside. One of my interlocutors in Hanoi, Mr. Thinh, shared several stories with me about growing up in Thái Nguyên town, approximately fifty miles north of Hanoi. Mr. Thinh's family evacuated Hanoi to Thái Nguyên during the war for their own safety. When it was safe to do so, Mr. Thinh traveled back to Hanoi to attend university courses. He recalled that he would often make long sections the journey on foot when American bombs destroyed the railroad line to the capital city. As an adult, Mr. Thinh moved back to Hanoi, where he works for a telecommunications company. During June 2016, Mr. Thinh and his wife invited me to travel with them to a day long festival of Northern Vietnamese music in Thái Nguyên town. Sponsored by UNESCO, the festival was a showcase of amateur traditional music clubs across Vietnam. When I commented on the large number of amateur

performers in the festival to Mr. Thinh, he hypothesized that this wide-spread interest in traditional music is relatively new, that after the American War and economic troubles in the decades following, people were too busy trying to make money, too busy trying to survive, to have musical hobbies (Thinh 2016).

While the disruptions of war curtailed some musical activities in wartime Vietnam, amateur music making was particularly encouraged in North Vietnam as a showcase for the patriotism and artistic potential of the working class. On a local and regional level, Party leaders encouraged factories, schools, agricultural co-operatives, and other workplaces to organize musical groups called *tu bien dien* or "composed and performed by oneself" (Đào 1984: 116). To showcase these local amateur groups, beginning in the 1950s the Art Department of the National Ministry of Culture in North Vietnam supported national festivals beginning to showcase amateur musicians. Local celebrities featured in these festivals had the opportunity to be "discovered" by larger audiences. For example, according to Đào Trọng Từ, Luu Thi Hoa, an employee of Kien An Engineering works, gained local notoriety as "as a confirmed talent on the dan bau (monochord)" (ibid: 116).

Along with promoting a sense of patriotism, these musical performances were intended as acts of resistance against foreign domination and resilience during wartime. For example, in an essay published by the Hanoi Foreign Languages Publishing House (a state organization), Đào Trọng Từ highlights the unilateral participation of amateur musicians during a 1956 festival regardless of their primary occupation or province of origin, suggesting a sense of unity in a musical declaration of national independence against American hegemony. A later festival,

held in 1970, promoted the slogan "let our songs drown the bomb explosions," recalling a line from the Viet Minh anthem "Tiến Quân Ca" written by Văn Cao during the First Indochina War: "the sound of distant guns vies with our martial song" (ibid 147).

The theme of music overpowering sounds of war is a common thread in Vietnamese musical memories of the war. One afternoon after a lesson with my đàn bầu teacher Mr. Phạm Kim Thành, he shared a particularly formative memory involving the đàn bầu. During the war, Mr. Thành and his family were among the few musicians who did not evacuate the city for the countryside, and they continued to perform when possible. Mr. Thành remembers that one night in 1972, when he was about seven years old, he participated in a rooftop concert to entertain remaining Hanoians in the neighborhood. A crowd gathered, but during the middle of the performance, a bombing raid began to pummel the city. Although he was a child, Mr. Thành remembers that he did not stop playing the đàn bầu because he felt that the music was more important than his personal safety; moreover, he sensed that if he continued to play, the đàn bầu would be "more powerful than the falling bombs." (Phan Kim Thành 2016a)

After Mr. Thành finished this story, he paused for a moment before quickly adding with a smile, "the past is the past," and "Vietnam and America are friends now." This was the only occasion during which Mr. Thành discussed the war. He only shared this memory during an informal discussion, outside of our more formal lessons. During my visits to Vietnam, I have found it difficult to broach the topic of the American-Vietnamese war with my interlocutors. Notably, the presence of any

sort of voice or audio recording intensified this uneasiness. Contemplating the ethical considerations surrounding wartime ethnography, ethnomusicologist J. Martin Daughtry notes that testimony is "a special subcategory of interview…an interview becomes a testimony when it is marked by the solemnity that accrues around situations of vulnerability, violence, and loss." (2015: 14) Following Daughtry's definition of testimony, Vietnamese memories of the American war similarly ask for a reflective solemnity and respect that these are not necessarily memories they wish to share or highlight, especially with Americans.

Music Institutions in Wartime Vietnam

While musicians such as Mr. Thanh remember the ability of music to personally overpower the sounds of war, the governments of North and South Vietnam sponsored the arts for their political potential, opening a variety of new academies. In North Vietnam, The Vietnam National Music School (*Trường Âm nhạc Việt Nam*) opened in 1956. Established in the capital city of Hanoi, the first class comprised approximately sixty students. As Vietnamese historian Dao Trong Tu notes, most of the music school's first instructors had studied Western music abroad, including piano and violin. At the school's inception, only one teacher among the faculty specialized in traditional music (1977: 140).

Musical institutions also opened in the Republic of Vietnam in the South. In 1956, the National Academy of Music (renamed the Hồ Chí Minh City Conservatory of Music in 1975) opened in Saigon. Huỳnh Khải, an academy graduate, recalls that in 1956 the academy consisted of "two branches, one for Vietnamese music from the

north, the middle, and the south. The other branch was for western music, classical music. In the branch for music of the south, they taught đờn ca tài tử." (Huỳnh Khải 2015a) During his studies at the conservatory, Mr. Khải specialized in đờn ca tài tử chamber music in the "southern branch" of the conservatory. Today, he is a professor of đàn kim lute and đờn ca tài tử at the conservatory Along with these academies, in 1950 Nguyễn Hữu Ba, a specialist on the folk and court musics of Huế, founded a research institution, the Ty Bà Trang institute in Huế. The goal of the institute was to conduct historical research on Vietnamese traditional music, document current practices, and to teach and promote traditional music performance and composition for Vietnamese instruments (Trần Văn Khê 1972: 41).

The government created these institutions to support a repertoire of national music to represent a national and cultural identity. While the project of a pan-Vietnamese national repertoire was also a component of the National Music School in Hanoi, traditional musics were carefully scrutinized in Northern Vietnam for any aspects considered feudal, overly sentimental, or anti-revolutionary. Lê Tuấn Hùng notes that the government banned performances of music associated with spirit medium practices (*chầu văn*) for being "superstitious" and "backwards"; closed cafes featuring *cà tru* chamber music because of the perceived immorality of the genre; and was reluctant to fund performances of traditional music due to a lack of political content (1998: 96). In North Vietnam, only certain genres and particular aspects of traditional practices were appropriate for public performance.[19]

[19] For revolutionary chầu văn, see Norton 2009. For recordings of ca tru, see Ensemble Ca Trù Thái Hà de Hànội 2001 and Trân Van Khe 1991. Norton 2009 includes a DVD featuring various styles of chầu văn.

Although neotraditional music is based on the organization and aesthetics of western ensembles, conservatories promoted its performance on Vietnamese instruments to support a sense of cultural authenticity. As discussed in chapter two, the French occupation of Vietnam divided the peninsula into three separate political departments: Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina. The promotion of a pan-Vietnamese repertoire, while inclusive of musics from North, Central, and South Vietnam rejected the regionalism enforced during the French occupation and encouraged a nationalist Vietnamese identity following independence in 1954 (Lê 1998: 87-88). Despite this emphasis on forming a pan-Vietnamese repertoire, musical regionalism did persist in practice: for example, instructors at the Saigon Academy focused on Central and Southern Vietnamese genres, Huế music and nhạc tài tử in particular. This musical focus was due in part to the abundance of master teachers of these genres in Saigon, but was also perhaps a result of growing tensions between North and South Vietnam following partition. Despite this emphasis on particular genres over others, the development of a national, pan-Vietnamese repertoire began to change the ways musicians studying at these music academies identified their practice. While traditional musicians in Vietnam had historically studied one specific genre, such as hát chèo theater or ca trù chamber music, graduates from the Traditional Music Department at the National Academy of Music in Saigon began to identify themselves as specialists of "national music," fluent in a variety of genres (ibid: 92).

Despite ideological differences in North and South Vietnam, establishing a pan-Vietnamese musical repertoire became an important political project. This

repertoire, known as *quốc nhạc* or "national music" developed into a new genre, nhạc dân tộc hiện đại.

Neotraditional Music (Nhạc Dân Tộc Hiện Đại)

While commonly translated as "neotraditional" music, a more literal translation of *nhạc dân tộc hiện đại* would emphasize that the genre is a product of the contemporary moment. While *nhạc* and *dân tộc* translate to music and nation, respectively, *hiện đại* (modern) indicate the importance of the present. In *Neotraditional Music in Vietnam,* Miranda Arana unpacks the term *nhạc dân tộc hiện đại* in great detail, tracing the surrounding historical and linguistic context of the term as well as noting alternate terminologies (1999: 47-49). To the present discussion, it is important to acknowledge that while nhạc dân tộc hiện đại looks to the past by aligning its musical material with traditional practices, as a genre it is very much rooted in the present.

In North Vietnam, the creation of a neotraditional, national repertoire was closely aligned with the need to select musical forms appropriate to communist ideology. The Vietnam Music Institute, founded in the late 1950s, served as the musicological research branch of the Music Academy in Hanoi. Of musicologists at the Institute, Đào Trọng Từ observes that, "[l]ike the Hungarian Bela Bartok…they had to explore virgin lands in order to bring to light the spiritual riches that popular memory and peasant traditions had preserved over centuries and therefore saved from foreign intrusion in all its forms." (1984: 142). In drawing a comparison to the work of Hungarian composer Béla Bartók (1881-1945), linking the work of

Vietnamese musicologists to that of Western composers, Đào Trọng Từ draws both a cultural and historical allegory for his English-speaking audiences. Although the composer died before Hungary became a communist nation, Bartók was significant figure in communist Vietnam. Additionally, Bartók was a collector of folk songs, an important project of the Vietnamese state. According Đào Trọng Từ, by researching musical traditions of ethnic minorities and pre-colonial traditional musics—the "virgin lands" of Vietnamese musical history, the music institute preserved musical practices, the "spiritual riches" of the Vietnamese people unspoiled by colonial domination. Other ethnomusicologists have unpacked this practice of appropriating the music of ethnic minorities into the dominant culture in other contexts. For example, Rachel Harris has discussed the ethical stakes of transforming music of peoples in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region into a "tangible commodity" for incorporation into the Han majority culture in China (2005). In North Vietnam, building a national repertoire required a new generation of trained musical fieldworkers, so students from Hanoi studied abroad in Soviet countries and in China, learning how to gather musical materials and—just as importantly—to discern which musical materials were worth gathering.

While the musical materials—such as folk melodies, regional lullabies, or funeral songs—gathered by Institute fieldworkers were Vietnamese in origin, the organizational framework used to structure nhạc dân tộc hiện đại was rooted in western art music. Composers arranged neotraditional pieces utilizing Western harmonic structures, chordal progressions, and tempered pitches. Formally, neotraditional works often resemble Western concerti, as homophonic or

polyphonic multi-movement works, written in Western notation. These neotraditional concerti comprise contrasting material in terms of tempo, instrumentation, and dynamics, often featuring one or a small group of instruments as soloists. For example, several nhạc dân tộc hiện đại pieces showcased the đàn bầu as a soloist. With its famous undulating timbre, the đàn bầu stands in sharp contrast to other Vietnamese chordophones, setting the instrument apart from a larger ensemble. However, the đàn bầu was chosen not only for its musical attributes but also for its cultural significance: while other Vietnamese instruments have Chinese antecedents, the đàn bầu has a history unique to Vietnam.

While formally rooted in Western art music, neotraditional music is typically performed by groups of traditional Vietnamese instruments, organized in the manner of a Western orchestras. According to Miranda Arana, musician Hoàng Đạm, having studied in Beijing, brought the idea of a folk orchestra back to Vietnam (1999: 52). In China, large ensembles of Chinese instruments had performed *guoyue* ("music of the nation") beginning in the 1930s. Frederick Lau traces the Chinese orchestra to the late 1920s, when musician Zheng Zhiwen experimented with enlarging his *jiangnan sizhu* chamber ensemble to accommodate up to thirty-five musicians, with sections of each instrument comprising multiple players (Lau 2008: 36-37). Decades later, the government's elevation of traditional music and musicians led to the creation of state-sponsored orchestras, the first of which was the Central Broadcasting Station Orchestra in Beijing, established in 1953. It is highly likely that Vietnamese musicians in China, such as Hoàng Đạm, would have encountered such orchestras during their travels.

Folk orchestras of traditional Vietnamese instruments include groups of the same instruments playing together in sections, analogous to the Western art music orchestra. While instrumental ensembles were common in Vietnamese traditional music (e.g., nhạc tài tử ensembles), duplicates of the same instrument in an ensemble were uncommon. Thus, in order for traditional instruments to play together in a folk orchestra format, instrument builders physically altered instruments. For example, instrument builders altered the đàn tỳ bà four string lute to accommodate chromatically spaced frets (Arana 1999: 57). As discussed in chapter two, listeners could commonly hear amplified đàn bầu as early as the 1940s, with the availability of loud speakers abandoned by the Japanese military. In the 1960s and 1970s, instrument builders equipped đàn bầu with pickups, allowing the instrument to connect directly to an amplification system. Similarly, instrument builders also equipped the đàn tranh zither with pickups, allowing the instrument to be heard while playing with a large ensemble.

Such ensembles of traditional instruments are not a historical phenomenon unique to Vietnam. Western-style arrangements of folk music, orchestral groupings of folk instruments, and instrument modifications are also part of the musical histories of China, the Soviet Union, and former Soviet bloc nations. In *Women Musicians of Uzbekistan,* ethnomusicologist Tanya Merchant chronicles the history of arranged folk music performed by groups of women musicians playing the two-string dutar lute. Merchant notes that arranged folk music in Uzbekistan has roots in Russian folk orchestras. In the late nineteenth century, Vasily Andreev, a Russian balalaika player, created several versions of the three-string lute to facilitate

consort-style performance. With fixed frets and equally tempered tuning, these balalaikas could perform arrangements of folk songs in the style of a Western orchestra (Merchant 2015: 84). In a similar manner in Uzbekistan, consorts of differently sized dutar played arrangements of folk melodies. Merchant highlights the political work these ensembles performed, observing that reconstructed instruments and arranged folk music "…fit into the government's ideological project of uplifting the folk and educating the masses" (ibid. 85). In Northern Vietnam, neotraditional music was also connected to "uplifting the folk" by promoting music of various regions and genres while selectively eliminating practices aligned with feudal or an anti-revolutionary past.

In her research on the politics of folk orchestras in Bulgaria, ethnomusicologist Donna Buchanan connects the rise of professional and amateur folk ensembles to the institutionalization of music in a socialist state. In Bulgaria, the professionalization of music (associated with symphonic performance) occurred at the end of the nineteenth century. Performing domestic Bulgarian music (*narodna muzika*) had very specific class and ethnic connotations. In the 20th century, the popularization of radio and the formation of state ensembles gave a sense of legitimacy to music as a professional career (Buchanan 1995: 386-387). In Vietnam, a legacy of court music and royal patronage of the arts had historically created the role of professional musician. However, negative connotations with various genres of traditional music in Northern Vietnam jeopardized the role of professional musician outside of specific, institutionalized settings. Furthermore, proponents of neotraditional music in both North and South indicated that the institutionalization

of music, with pedagogical methods rooted in Western notation, was key to improving the standards of Vietnamese music (Arana 1997: 37). The institutionalization of music in Vietnam—traditional music performance and pedagogy in particular— legitimized professional traditional music performance in a shifting political climate.

As the war intensified in the late 1960s, violence in Vietnamese urban centers disrupted the activities of these music institutions. In North Vietnam, for example, bombing in the capital temporarily closed the Music Academy. Smaller schools in surrounding provinces were established to continue the school's work, supporting smaller ensembles of traditional instruments. These reduced ensembles continued to play arranged folk songs and new compositions, including nhạc dân tộc hiện đại pieces written for fewer instruments. Arana notes that these wartime ensembles popularized nhạc dân tộc hiện đại played by chamber ensembles rather than larger folk orchestras, a trend that would continue after the war (1999: 52-53).

Conclusion

Following Reunification in 1975, neotraditional music became a focal point of musical institutions in the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam as a cultural force for a unified, communist state. The following chapter will trace the history of neotraditional music in Vietnam from Reunification to the present, noting how shifting political and cultural climates have impacted neotraditional composition and performance.

"Art is the artifact of the imagination," writes Viet Thanh Nguyen in *Nothing Ever Dies*, "and the imagination is the best manifestation of immortality possessed by the human species, a collective tablet recording both human and inhuman deeds and desires." (2016: 12) Upon the "collective tablet" of Vietnamese musical history, the sonic traces of deeds and desires—both human and inhuman—resound. As the *tân nhạc* patriotic anthems of the First Indochina War tell of a human desire for independence, self-determination, and freedom, they too speak of the inhuman deeds of revenge, destruction, and bloodshed. Meanwhile, memories of music overcoming the sounds of war are a testament to the power of art to connect, inspire, and strengthen humans in times of crisis. Also on this "collective tablet," the rise of music institutions in 20th century Vietnam speaks to the political power of music to give voice to the desires and deeds of nations long after guns fall silent. The following chapter will follow this thread, focusing on the musical histories of Vietnam following the end war between North and South in 1975 through to the present.

Chapter Four. The Đàn Bầu in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1975-Present

On April 30, 1975, North Vietnamese tanks rolled through the streets of downtown Saigon. Led by the People's Army of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (also known as the Việt Cộng), this invasion marked the end of twenty years of conflict between North and South Vietnam. The transition to a unified state under the sole authority of the Communist Party of Vietnam marked a profound transformation in the political, cultural, and social lives of Vietnamese people.[20]

This chapter traces the cultural history of the đàn bầu in Vietnam in postrevolutionary Vietnam from 1975 to the present. This history demonstrates the intersections of Vietnamese nationalism, cultural identity, and musical expression as manifest in đàn bầu performance. From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the Communist Party of Vietnam carefully controlled public music performance through censorship and the institutionalization of music. Socialist realist discourse in the Soviet Union influenced Vietnamese cultural politics. Following reunification, for example, the state censored music written before 1975, banning the "yellow" or sentimental popular music popular in southern Vietnam due a perceived lack of revolutionary content. Historian Patrica Pelley argues that the Vietnamese cultural revolution (*cách mạng văn hóa*), diverted from other cultural revolutions in its approach to traditional culture. Rather than an outright rejection of all pre-1975 musics, for example, the Vietnamese state "more often sought a synthesis and a

[20] For a discussion of ethnology and national identity politics in the Socialist Republic, see Pelley 2002: 103-107.

means to assimilate prerevolutionary culture to a postrevolutionary setting." (2002: 114) Vietnamese musical instruments in particular could be assimilated into a post-revolutionary culture as nationalist symbols. A distinctly Vietnamese instrument (without antecedents in the Chinese instrumentarium), the đàn bầu held particular potential as a symbol of a unified, pan-Vietnamese national culture.

In Vietnam, the state has institutionally promoted the đàn bầu as a national instrument in the standardization of performance and pedagogy, with the formation of a nationalist repertoire, and through promoting performances of the đàn bầu abroad as a form of musical diplomacy. This chapter historicizes myriad issues surrounding the state, cultural politics, and musical life in Vietnam from the late 1970s to the present day. Conservatory traditional music departments standardized đàn bầu performance and pedagogy. After 1975, the prevalence of neotraditional concerto-format works featuring solo đàn bầu (with nationalist or revolutionary titles) demonstrates the role of the đàn bầu as a national symbol.

In the twenty-first century, state institutions continue to invest financial and material resources in traditional music departments programs that encourage and promote đàn bầu performance. However, music academies are enrolling fewer students pursuing đàn bầu degrees. This decline has led to a reactionary movement within the conservatory and within the government that seeks to encourage young people to take up the đàn bầu. Discussing this "preservation dilemma," I argue that institutional investment in the đàn bầu continues to reflect the cultural policies of the Vietnamese state.

Through performances of the đàn bầu abroad as cultural diplomacy, the state positioned the instrument a cultural representative of Vietnam. Examining a series of international performances during the 1970s and 1980s, I discuss how the discourse surrounding international performance situated the đàn bầu as a cultural ambassador of Vietnam. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, economic and cultural reforms have led Vietnam away from a centrally controlled economy (the *Đổi Mới* or renovation policies) and have continued to expand the role of the đàn bầu in international diplomacy today.

The Cultural Politics of Music in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

The Vietnamese Communist Party scrutinized any musical practices they viewed as a remnant of the pre-Socialist era. A government campaign titled "*bài trừ văn hóa phản động và đồi truy*" (destroying the reactionary and lustful culture) banned a variety of works created before 1975, including art, literature, and music (Lê 1998: 96). Art did not have to be explicitly political to be censored; sentimentality was also closely criticized as being counterproductive.

Southern Vietnamese popular music was a particular target of criticism. Labeled *nhạc vàng* or "yellow music" (a reference to the Chinese categorization of ideologically undesirable music), these popular songs included dance music, love ballads, and nostalgic songs. Historian Philip Taylor notes that a state supported monthly magazine, *Văn hóa Nghệ thuật* (Culture and Arts) published a series of articles beginning in 1976 outlining the dangers of "yellow music." In these articles, party leaders critiqued the lyrical content as well as vocal techniques and melodic

styles of yellow music as too mournful and overly sentimental, emotions counterproductive to the revolution (Taylor 2001: 43).[21] As music historian Jason Gibbs has noted, the state also censored Vietnamese bolero, a genre of love songs based in the global obsession with South American ballroom dance in the 1950s and 1960s, was incredibly popular in South Vietnam (2016). The Vietnamese Communist Party viewed both popular "yellow" songs and bolero as decadent distractions from the revolutionary aspirations of the state.

The state also scrutinized traditional music for its associations with a pre-communist past. Throughout the 1960s, the state in North Vietnam had censored traditional music and limited funds for due to a perceived lack of political content (Lê 1998: 96). Since the government criticized any musical performance without socialist content, musicians avoided public performance of pre-revolutionary folk songs and traditional music. However, as Lê Tuấn Hùng notes, several genres performed by amateur, non-professional musicians such as nhạc tài tử and nhạc Huế chamber music groups continued to quietly thrive outside the purview of the state. Within nhạc tài tử and nhạc Huế ensembles, musicians continued to play the đàn bầu and other traditional instruments, teaching new students and performing in small, private settings (1998: 98).

While the state censored the performance of traditional music, the party also recognized the revolutionary potential of incorporating elements of these practices into a new culture that was "socialist in content and nationalist in character" (*nội dung xã hội chủ nghĩa và tính chất dân tộc*). A direct reference to cultural policy in

[21] For review and analysis of excerpts from *Văn hóa Nghệ thuật,* see Taylor 2002: 43-51.

the Soviet Union, this slogan was already manifesting in North Vietnam before 1975 in the development of nhạc dân tộc hiện đại or neotraditional music (Norton 2009: 33). After reunification of the country, the newly renamed Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music (formerly the National Music School in Saigon) began to actively teach and promote neotraditional music as well.[22] In the following section, I discuss the development and role of neotraditional music in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from 1975 to the present.

Neotraditional Music

As discussed in chapter three, *nhạc dân tộc hiện đại* or neotraditional music (literally "national modern music") includes new compositions for traditional Vietnamese instruments, organized within the framework of western art music.
Neotraditional composers often arrange folk or revolutionary songs into new compositions, but also write new material based on traditional idioms. Formally, neotraditional works often resemble Western concerti, featuring one soloist accompanied by an orchestra of Vietnamese instruments.

Composed in the present, neotraditional works draw on existing genres and Vietnamese traditional instruments to legitimize the cultural authenticity of state-sponsored music. In his introduction to *The Invention of Tradition,* Eric Hobsbawm outlines how national traditions, which claim to have roots in the past, are often modern constructs that serve a nationalist purpose. Benedict Anderson draws upon

[22] Beyond Vietnam, ethnomusicologists have analyzed the relationships communist ideological legacies and musical nationalism in a variety of political contexts including Bulgaria (Buchanan 1995), China (Rees 2000; Lao 2008), Uzbekistan (Levin 1996; Merchant 2015).

Hobswam's ideas in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* in which Anderson connects the rise of the modern nation state in the 20th century to cultural changes—in technology, geography, literature and journalism—which reflected changing conceptions of space and time in human thought. The idea of a "nation" was only historically possible, Anderson demonstrates, because of constructed ideals of unity and connectedness in the popular imagination. Invented traditions reference events of the past often enough to build a sort of assumed continuity in which lineage is taken for granted (Anderson 1983). In what is perceived as an ever-changing modern world, Hobsbawm argues, invented traditions "attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant." (Hobsbawm 1983:2) These traditions fabricate or "invent" a continuous connection to an imaginary shared past. Through the use of Vietnamese instruments, neotraditional music is thus able to frame a connection to an imagined Vietnamese past.

A national symbol of Vietnam, the đàn bầu was frequently featured as a solo instrument in neotraditional compositions. Along with its musical capabilities, the đàn bầu was chosen due to the instrument's particular political status. As discussed in chapter two, a variety of origin stories surrounding the đàn bầu locate the instrument in a pre-colonial, non-feudal past. Whether the đàn bầu was invented by observant farmers or gifted to a poor woman as a reward for her loyalty, as an instrument of blind street musicians, the đàn bầu was an instrument performed before the French occupation outside of court settings.

Pedagogy and Neotraditional Music in Post-1975 Vietnam

In North Vietnam, the Vietnam National Music School (*Trường Âm nhạc Việt Nam*) opened in 1956. At the academy, students studied from technique books that standardized the playing styles and musical examples students learned at each step of their musical development. Technique books incorporated neotraditional pieces for pedagogical purposes. One example of a neotraditional piece written for đàn bầu "Vì miền Nam" (For the South) by Huy Thục. Written in 1968, "Vì miền Nam" is included in a 1979 volume of a series of scores titled *Những Tác Phẩm Cho Nhạc Cụ Truyền Thống* or *Works for Traditional Instruments* (La Thăng 1979). This volume (labeled *Tập* or Level One) features three neotraditional compositions. Along with "Vì miền Nam," the volume includes "Bình Minh Trên Rẻo Cao" (Bình Minh on the High Path) by Phương Bảo (for đàn tranh zither and *đàn tam thập luc* hammered dulcimer) and "Quê Tôi" (My Hometown) by Xuản Khải (for đàn nguyệt lute and đàn tam thập luc). Each piece is written in western notation with additional symbols indicating ornamentation, explained in a preface. For example, a tilde (~) sign indicates *rung* vibrato, which on the đàn bầu is implemented by lightly pressing back and forth on the stick with the left hand. In practice, đàn bầu musicians use subtly different sizes and speeds of vibrato for dramatic effect. Presumably, a student using this level one book would follow the guidelines of a teacher. Tempo and dynamic marks are indicated in both Italian and Vietnamese. "Vì miền Nam," for example, begins "*lento con espressione"* (slow with expression) or "Chậm, tha thiết" (slow, earnest).

"Vì miền Nam" highlights the đàn bầu, with chordal accompaniment from đàn tam thập luc dulcimer and "traditional percussion" (*nhạc cụ gõ đệm*). The piece is in c minor and C major, both considered appropriate keys for the đàn bầu. Vũ Hồng Thịnh, my đàn bầu teacher in San Jose, explained that the instrument sounds best in a key where the tonic is one of the natural harmonics (e.g., C major, G major, g minor, etc.), "with about one or two sharps or flats." (Vũ Hồng Thịnh, personal communication January 19, 2017). Written "For the South," the introductory c minor section may be read as a sad reflection on the partition of the country. From contact with western musical conventions, minor keys are associated with sadness by listeners in Vietnam. Beyond this connection, however, c minor roughly corresponds to the Vietnamese *oán* mode, which has extra-musical associations with "profound sadness." (Nguyễn Vĩnh Bảo 1970: 5)

According to the score, an eight-measure dulcimer introduction crescendos into to the đàn bầu's entrance, comprised of four measures of triplet arpeggios followed by a slow, decrescendo passage featuring vibrato (La Thăng 1979). This introductory section demands precise intonation in the player's left hand as well as subtle differences in the amount of pressure on the string in the right hand to produce contrasting dynamics. Each of the three sections of "Vì miền Nam" demands a different technique of the player. The first section requires skill playing slurred notes by producing three different pitches from the same overtone, which demands careful attention to intonation. The second section, *Allegretto deciso* (fast with determination) or *Hơi nhanh, quả quyết* (slightly fast, assertive), features rapid series of accented notes produced by stopping the string with the right hand

immediately after producing the overtone, while the third section includes series of sixteenth notes requiring rapid and precise right hand technique. “Vì miền Nam” thus serves a pedagogical function while also contributing to a national repertoire for the đàn bầu. Aimed towards novice musicians, *Những Tác Phẩm Cho Nhạc Cụ Truyền Thống* (Works for Traditional Instruments) teaches students the techniques they must master in order to play neotraditional music. These pedagogical manuals promote the genre by encouraging a new generation of young musicians to learn its repertoire.

Xuân Khải, professor đàn nguyệt lute at the National Music School (and composer of “Quê Tôi” mentioned above) wrote one of the first textbooks for the đàn nguyệt. Along with instrumental techniques and pedagogical exercises, Xuân Khải’s textbook features musical examples from a variety of genres, including *hát văn* ritual music, *cải lương* theater, and *nhạc Huế* imperial chamber music. Ethnomusicologist Barley Norton notes that transcribing these melodies into western notation fixes specific versions of each piece, a method that directly counters to the practice individual interpretation valued in Vietnamese traditional music. However, Norton recognizes that Xuân KhảI and his conservatory colleagues acknowledged this, and encouraged their students to think of these notated pieces as “melodic frameworks.” (Norton 2009: 44) Learning to play from a textbook might speed up the learning process, Xuân Khải explained, but in order to “release the soul” of the music, a student must learn how to make the piece his or her own through the careful guidance of a teacher.

Academy instructors also wrote textbooks for the đàn bầu. These programs developed textbooks for their students, with examples written in Western notation. In the 1980s, professor of đàn bầu Nguyễn Thị Thanh Tâm, one of the first female đàn bầu musicians to receive training at the National Music School, wrote a series of đàn bầu technique books that describe how to play the đàn bầu and include musical examples, notated in Western staff notation, to demonstrate a variety of techniques (Đào Trọng Từ 1984: 138; Nguyen 2015).

During private lessons with my Phan Kim Thành in Hanoi, I learned from one of Nguyễn Thị Thanh Tâm's đàn bầu textbooks. Mr. Thành, a former conservatory professor of đàn bầu, was a colleague of Nguyễn Thị Thanh Tâm during their time at the conservatory in the 1980s and 1990s. Although Mr. Thành used the textbook to help me learn specific techniques, he would occasionally alter notation in the book using his red pen when he disagreed with the transcription or felt that another ornamentation was more appropriate to my skill level. Occasionally, Mr. Thành would write out other pieces by hand in Western notation for me to use, moving away from the textbook when he had a specific song in mind to encourage a specific skill. During a conversation after one of our lessons, Mr. Thành acknowledged that as an American musician studying a Vietnamese instrument, I had a lot to learn before I would be able to interpret music on the đàn bầu, not just replicate notes on a page. Like Barley Norton observed with Xuân Khải's đàn nguyệt textbooks, Nguyễn Thị Thanh Tâm's đàn bầu textbook was a starting point for my lessons with Mr.

Thành, but only with the guidance of my teacher would I be able to access the "soul" of the music.[23]

During my fieldwork in Ho Chi Minh City in October 2015, I was able to observe the structure of formal đàn bầu conservatory instruction, receiving permission to attend a meeting of the đàn bầu studio at the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music (Nhạc Viện TP. Hồ Chí Minh), led by professor Toàn Thắng. Six students comprised Mr. Thắng's studio. Each student takes a variety of music courses, including Western art music history and theory as well as courses in the history of Vietnamese traditional music. At the time I visited Thắng's class, three of the younger students were still in high school, so they spent part of each day attending courses like math and science, outside of the music curriculum. Đàn bầu lessons are held in a group, with all students present. At each meeting, Mr. Thắng assigns students pieces individually, depending on his or her skill level.

During my visit to Mr. Thắng's studio, I noticed that he did not use a textbook. Mr. Thắng did choose to utilize Western notation to facilitate the student's acquisition of new material; however, he gave his students pieces that he himself had transcribed for đàn bầu by hand for them to hand copy and then return. When I asked one of the students about this later, they explained that the act of writing a piece of music out by hand was an important part of the learning process. Mr. Thắng did make one exception in his teaching methods. At the time of my visit, Mr. Thắng had a blind student in his studio. Instead of written music, Mr. Thắng provided the

[23] Ethnomusicologists have discussed the development of pedagogical materials for folk musics in other cultural traditions (for example, see Merchant 2015: 52-54 and Lau 1996: 120).

student with an audio recording of pieces to learn at home as well of recordings of all group lessons. During these lessons, Mr. Thắng would harmonize on the piano while the student played his assigned piece, so that the student could play along with this recording at home.

Conservatories in Vietnam have not replaced private instruction outside of the state classroom, but the institutionalization of music in Vietnam requires professional musicians to obtain the prestige associated with the academy. Growing up in Hanoi during the 1980s, Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ studied with a "master musician" (a hereditary musician) and also attended the National Academy of Music, where she later earned a degree in đàn tranh zither performance. Ms. Vân-Ánh sees the merits of both systems. "I like the conservatory system, I learned form it. I like the master musician system, I learned from it. But studying with the master musician," she reflected, "it's like stepping into a time machine. They are the roots of Vietnamese culture." (Võ 2017.) While Ms. Vân-Ánh values the experiences and knowledge she gained from a conservatory education, she believes that studying with master teachers offers an insight into the past. But it was with her degree from the National Academy of Music that Ms. Vân-Ánh was able to work in state-run national theaters, such as the Thang Long Water Puppet Theater

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, students from state conservatories in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City mastered neotraditional music alongside a variety of other genres, including western art music. As traditional instruments represented the Vietnamese past, groups of musicians were sent abroad by the state to represent Vietnamese culture globally.

Vietnamese Musicians Abroad

After 1975, Vietnamese musicians traveled abroad for state-sponsored concerts and festivals in a variety of concerts. In a short Vietnamese-language history đàn bầu of the published by the Vietnamese Institute for Musicology, musicologist Phạm Phúc Minh chronicles these performances abroad, organized by region. He begins by listing a series of performances abroad, including concerts in an international youth festival in 1957 and performances in Japan in 1979, listing names of participating musicians and selections from their commentary on the visit. Phạm Phúc Minh also notes that in 1978, a group of Vietnamese musicians toured Latin America, visiting Jamaica, Mexico, Venezuela, Panama, and Cuba. The Vietnamese musicians were particularly well received in Cuba, where, according to Phạm Phúc Minh, an audience started to chant: "Cuba – si! Việt Nam – si! Cuba - Việt Nam – si!"—encouraging friendship between the two communist nations.

However, in addition to Vietnamese songs ensembles would often learn to play an arrangement of a local melody as a nod to their audiences. For example, during a tour to Italy in 1990, a solo đàn bầu player charmed the audience with a rendition of *Ru Con Nam Bộ* (Southern Lullaby) before performing a version of "Trở về Surientô" (Torna a Surriento or Come Back to Sorento), a popular Neapolitan song written in 1902 (Phạm Phúc Minh 1999: 100).[24]

[24] During đàn bầu studies in Hanoi with Phạm Kim Thành, one of the first songs I learned in my lessons was the Stephen Foster song "Oh Susanna." Mr. Thành explained that he performs this song especially to impress American audiences.

The presentation of the đàn bầu on the international stage is part of a carefully constructed presentation of Vietnamese culture. While the đàn bầu is valued for its associations with youth, beauty, and strength as evidenced in its origin stories, it is also a symbol of Vietnamese identity as an instrument uniquely of Vietnamese origin. Furthermore, several origin legends shared above pinpoint the ingenuity of observant working class Vietnamese—farmers and laborers—as the impetus for the first đàn bầu.

In *Invented Traditions,* Eric Hobsbawm reminds the historian to consider the "powerful ritual complex" surrounding invented traditions (1983: 6). Material considerations include the construction of concert halls and other performance spaces, adapting instruments for performance in these spaces, and standardizing uniforms or codes for performance dress. These are not fixed, but change over time and depending on performance context. In "'Naxi Ancient Music Rocks London': Validation, Presentation, and Observation in the First International Naxi Music Tour," ethnomusicologist Helen Rees chronicles an overseas tour undertook by the Dayan Ancient Music Association, a Naxi performance ensemble from Lijang County in China's Yunnan Province. For the ensemble's tour of England, the group had several performance questions to consider. Firstly, how to present Naxi music in concert? Traditionally, music is played in homes and for small gatherings. Within the framework of a Western concert, how should the musicians place themselves on stage? How to introduce each piece? (Rees 2002: 440-442)

Rees discusses the decision-making process the ensemble undertook in preparation for performances in the West. She notes how the musicians, through

observation of the aesthetic preferences of tourist-audience members in Lijang, were able to develop performance codes tailored for Western British audiences (ibid.: 434). While Naxi music itself is not an "invented tradition" in the Hobsbawmian sense, adaptations of Naxi performance practice (e.g., wearing special costumes) construct an invented framework of performing the exotic; in an analysis of a similar performative framework, Rees discusses the United States tour of Peking opera star Mei Lanfang in the early 20th century (ibid.: 444). In both instances, Chinese musicians (through observation and research) manipulated western performance expectations to ensure a successful tour.

However, Rees is not dismissive of the musician's hard work or artistry in performing abroad. In her discussion of Naxi adapted performance practices, Rees supports Frederick Lau's argument that even in "invented traditions," the musicians and artists involved have agency. While the political contexts surrounding the performance of tradition need to be unpacked, it is important to take these traditions seriously as cultural activity. Dismissing the solo dizi tradition or the Naxi English tour as propaganda or superficial tourist performance is, fundamentally, a flawed analysis. In considering similar phenomena in performances of Vietnamese music abroad, it is important to acknowledge the complex relationships between musicians, state organizations, and foreign audiences. Recognizing musicians' personal stories, as Rees considers with the Dayan Ancient Music Association, is one way to avoid painting overly broad strokes. Similarly, Vietnamese musicians invested time and their artistic talents in state-sponsored concerts abroad. Musicians also valued their experiences performing internationally. Musician

Nguyễn Thị Thanh Tâm fondly remembers her trips to the Soviet Union, for example, during which she felt welcomed and appreciated by audiences. Reflecting on these performances decades later during a newspaper interview, she observed that Vietnamese audiences did not appreciate the đàn bầu as much as foreign audiences (Nguyen 2016). While international recognition affirms the importance of Vietnamese culture on a global stage, it also acknowledges the importance of Vietnamese music domestically.

Problematizing oversimplified interpretations of international music performance, it is also important to recognize how musicians' experiences vary over time due to shifting political situations, economic changes, and technological innovations. In the next section, I consider how Vietnamese musicians' relationships with the United States changed following the re-establishment of diplomatic ties in the 1990s.

Đổi Mới (Renovation)

By the early 1990s, a changing political climate internationally and economic hardships domestically contributed to a shift in Vietnam's political policies. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Vietnamese Communist Party Leader Nguyen Van Linh encouraged the *Đổi Mới* policy—"to change to the new," commonly translated in English as "renovation." Under Đổi Mới, the government began to allow private enterprise, encouraged foreign investment, and relaxed censorship of some cultural and religious practices (Taylor 2013: 617). As part of the renovation policies, the government decreased financial investment in the arts, including

musical performance groups. This led musicians to seek private sources of funding, including corporate sponsorship.

The re-establishment of diplomatic ties with western nations also created opportunities for governmental cultural diplomacy programs. Due to the legacy of French colonialism, French cultural organizations are prevalent in Vietnam. The French Cultural Center in Vietnam (*L'Institut Francais du Vietnam* or *L'Espace*) regularly sponsors events for French and Vietnamese artists and musicians. (L'Institut Francais Viet Nam 2017). Along with national French initiatives, individual municipalities in France are also invested in cultural organizations in Hanoi. Sponsored by the French City of Toulouse, The Old Quarter Cultural Exchange Center in Hanoi (Văn Hóa Phố Cố Hà Nội) is a historical museum focused on Hanoi in the nineteenth century. The government of Toulouse sponsored the center as part of a larger 1995 agreement between the French city and Hanoi to "restore and develop the Old Quarter." (Mairie de Toulouse, "Accords d'Coopération.")

Along with the museum's regular display of archival photographs and maps, the Cultural Exchange Center sponsors musical performances in a small concert hall. The Ancient Music Group of Tonkin (*Đông Kinh Cổ Nhạc*, a reference to the French colonial political name for northern Vietnam) regularly performs at for a concert series titled "Musical Story of the Old Quarter" (*Chuyện Nhạc Phố Cổ*). In these "Music Story" concerts, Nguyễn Xuân Hoạch and a rotating group of other instrumentalists and singers present unamplified performances of a variety of traditional Vietnamese music: including *ca tru* songs, selections from *hat cheo* opera,

and instrumental folk songs. Mr. Hoạch often performs folk songs traditionally performed by xẩm musicians on acoustic instruments he builds in his home workshop, including the an acoustic đàn bầu xẩm.

The "Musical Story of the Old Quarter" concerts exist within a complex web of cultural politics that transverse Vietnam and the international diaspora community. The relationship between the French and Vietnamese governments is one of mutual financial interest. France is currently the third largest European investor in Vietnam, while three hundred French-owned businesses currently operate in the country (Republique Francaise 2017). As tourism in the Old Quarter continues to grow, cultural projects such as the Old Quarter Cultural Center help to sustain mutually beneficial economic ties between the two nations.

The đàn bầu also plays a role in diplomatic relations with the United States. In May 2016, President Barack Obama visited Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Musicians in Hanoi welcomed President Obama with a concert of Vietnamese traditional music, featuring the đàn bầu. While the official business of his state visit was discussed in the news—from the lifting of an arms embargo to the establishment of a Peace Corps program in Vietnam—the media also widely covered Obama's interactions with Vietnamese culture. In an article titled "American President Interested in Listening to Dan Bau at Reception Banquet" ("Tổng thống Mỹ thích thú nghe đàn bầu trong tiệc chiêu đãi"), the news website VNExpress reported that President Obama was greeted with twelve different pieces of music, including selections of Tây Nguyên and Quan họ folk songs from Vietnam's central highlands and northern provinces. One of the presenting musicians, Trường Bắc,

noted that the President was particularly interested in the T'rưng bamboo xylophone, the Vietnamized Hawaiian slide guitar, and the đàn bầu monochord (Lan Hạ. 2016). When the President of the United States is "interested in listening to the đàn bầu" per the VNExpress headline, this attention grants a level of visability and importance to the instrument.

As Secretary of State during the Obama administration, John Kerry was also presented with a đàn bầu performance and a short, hands-on lesson during a state dinner in 2013 (see figure 4.1). The US State Department added a photograph of the event to its social media pages and a video of the Secretary trying his hand at the instrument quickly appeared on YouTube (Học Dự Toán Online 2013).

Fig. 4.1: Photo posted on the U.S. Department of State Flickr page. The caption reads: "A musician explains to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry how to play a dan bau, or one-string guitar, after a performance at a dinner in the Secretary's honor in Hanoi, Vietnam, on December 16, 2016."
https://www.flickr.com/photos/statephotos/11403204466

As President Obama and John Kerry's musical experiences demonstrate, the đàn bầu continues to be an integral component of cultural diplomacy in Vietnam. A đàn bầu demonstration is a safe way to demonstrate Vietnamese cultural pride for

an American audience without highlighting the historical legacy of conflict between the two nations. Foreign interest in the đàn bầu also grants a level of prestiege to the instrument. From performances during the Cold War to performances in the Doi Moi era, presentations of Vietnamese music abroad represent a carefully curated version of Vietnamese culture on an international stage. Concert organizers featured the đàn bầu in these concerts as both an aural and physical symbol of pan-Vietnamese identity.

Conclusion

Since 1975, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has undergone significant political, economic, and cultural changes. Influenced by Chinese and Soviet policies, the Vietnamese Communist Party recognized the political potential of music to support teleological narratives of the nation. Conservatories institutionalized Vietnamese instruments (including the đàn bầu) through the standardization of pedagogy, performance, and repertoire. Supported by state institutions, neotraditional music draws upon visual and sonic references (traditional instruments and genres) to the past to represent a synthesis of Vietnamese culture in the present. The frequent performance of neotraditional works highlighting the đàn bầu illustrates the instrument's prevalence as a national symbol of Vietnam.

The Vietnamese state has used the đàn bầu to represent national culture internationally through concert tours abroad and in concert presentations for visiting diplomats. Along with state visits, the political and economic reforms of the 1990s have led to an influx in foreign visitors to Vietnam and an increase in

domestic tourism. The following chapter focuses on the role of the đàn bầu within the musical tourism industry in Vietnam, considering how the state and private entrepreneurs draw upon the instrument's cultural capital for political and economic gain.

Chapter Five. Economies of the Past: Đàn Bầu and the Strategic Nostalgias of Musical Tourism in Contemporary Vietnam

"Vietnam: Timeless Charm" is the official motto of the Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism, its logo a multi-colored, five-petaled lotus (see figure 5.1). In this logo, each petal represents a different facet of tourism in Vietnam: "eco-tourism," "sea and island tourism," "city tourism," "discovery and adventure tourism," and "cultural and historical tourism" (Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism n.d.). The "timeless charm" of Vietnam is, according to this five-pronged approach, preserved in both the natural landscape and in the cultural practices of the Vietnamese people.

Figure 5.1: The Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism's logo features a five-petaled lotus and the VNAT slogan: "Vietnam: Timeless Charm."
Image from the VNAT website www.vietnamtourism.com

This chapter focuses on the marketing of "cultural and historical" tourism in Vietnam, specifically the strategies and vocabularies of musical performances directed towards tourists both foreign and domestic. As a part of Vietnam's

"timeless charm," music wields political power in Vietnam, directing the ways that tourist audiences interact with an imagined Vietnamese history. In order to contextualize the intricacies of the tourist industry in contemporary Vietnam, I begin with a brief historical overview of tourism in Vietnam considering the "three key determinants of access" as they relate to tourism: border permeability (e.g., changing visa policies), infrastructure and transportation changes, and marketing (Suntikul et al. 2008: 70). The state's relationship to these three themes has greatly influenced the tourism industry in Vietnam. For example, the quality of transportation infrastructure—airports, highways, and railroads—largely determines which locations tourists will be able to access. Continually shifting relations of power between state and private tourist enterprises determine who travels to and within Vietnam, where they visit, and for what purpose. Within this discussion, I focus in particular on representations and performances of the đàn bầu in cultural tourism, considering the ways the đàn bầu is marketed towards foreign tourists as a musical representation of Vietnamese culture. Performances of the đàn bầu wield cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) as well as economic power, directing the ways that Vietnamese viewers foreign and domestic participate in the "imagined community" that is the Vietnamese nation (Hobsbawm 1992).

Within this historical context, I then consider the impact of UNESCO recognition upon tourism in Vietnam. Focusing on the intersections between state control and the cultural politics of UNESCO, I situate a case study on the impact of cultural politics: a musical television show titled *Tiếng Tơ Đồng.* The structure of the program entertains and informs Vietnamese audiences with performances of *đờn ca*

tài tử, a form of amateur chamber music popular in southern Vietnam recognized as an "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity." As various musical and extra-musical elements of *Tiếng Tơ Đồng* call upon its audiences' sense of nostalgia for a pre-industrial, Tiếng Tơ Đồng may also be understood as a form of tourism—not to a physical destination but to an idyllic, imagined past.

Building upon this discussion, I then connect the cultural politics of musical entertainment to three case studies of musical tourism in Vietnam showcasing the đàn bầu. First, I discuss Hội An, a city on Vietnam's central coast where the Ancient Town neighborhood is a designated UNESCO "World Heritage Site." Included in a 200,000 VND (approximately $9 USD) admission ticket to the Ancient Town, tourists have the option to attend free demonstrations and performances, including a concert of Vietnamese traditional music featuring the đàn bầu.

Next, I analyze a performance at the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater (*Nhà hát múa rối Thăng Long*) in Hanoi. The "Flying Dragon" theater, the Thăng Long Theater presents vignettes of Vietnamese legends enacted by wooden puppets floating on a small pool. A small ensemble of Vietnamese instruments accompanies the action, performing homophonic renditions of melodies from the hát chèo and nhạc Huế repertoires. Connecting the political history of water puppet theater to contemporary performance, I analyze how choices in musical and theatrical repertoire structure a state-sanctioned version of Vietnamese history.

Shifting to Ho Chi Minh City, I then consider the popularity of private "music tours" offered to visitors seeking a personalized experience. Here, I analyze the work of the Hoàngs, a musical family in Ho Chi Minh City who, taking advantage of

increasing numbers of tourists since the Đổi Mới, open their home to private performances for small, personalized concerts. One member of this musical family, Mr. Hoàng Anh, a professional đàn bầu musician, is now interested in using the internet as a marketing tool to bring musical tourists into their home studio.

Through a comparison of these three musical venues, I consider the various strategies of performing Vietnamese cultural heritage for foreign visitors and for domestic tourists, noting how these strategies diverge for their intended audiences. From the motivations of non-profit and international cultural preservation organizations to private enterprises, a variety of strategies are at play in these performances. Both spoken and musical vocabularies shift for foreign and domestic audiences.

While researching music in Vietnam's tourism industry, I became part of it. When attending events, I observed how musicians employ various strategies to appeal to tourists: changing the musical texture, performing a carefully curated regionally-based repertoire, and presenting specific instruments like the đàn bầu as symbolic representations of Vietnamese culture. During my fieldwork in Vietnam, my interlocutors would occasionally ask my opinion, as a western musician, on how to appeal to western listeners. Though at times these strategies strike me as problematic, I also recognize musicians' individual agency and feel a sense of obligation to assist when possible.

In writing about musical tourism, ethnomusicologists have critiqued binary concepts of insider/outsider and viewer/observer. Reflecting their involvement the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, for example, ethnomusicologists Jeff Titon (1999) and

Helen Rees (2012) argue that the festival participants with whom they worked (Old Regular Baptist singers from Kentucky and artists from China's Yunnan province, respectively) actively negotiated organizer's expectations while also pursuing their own artistic and personal goals. Rees notes that her role as festival presenter for the Yunnan participants also involved a careful negotiation as linguistic and cultural interpreter. "When interpreting between artists and visitors," Rees reflects, "I tried always to facilitate direct dialogue, adding extra information for either side when it seemed necessary. I also spent a lot of time answering questions from the Yunnanese participants as to what they were seeing around them." (2007: 40) As Titon and Rees noted at these Smithsonian Folklife Festivals, musicians actively challenged insider/outsider and viewer/observer dichotomies in responding to the festival environment.

Musical tourism engages performers and audiences in larger discourses surrounding national and personal identities, strategic essentialisms, and the economics of cultural authenticity. Building upon a bourgeoning body of ethnomusicological research on musical tourism (Baker 2016; Ryan 2011; Titon 2009; Carson 2004; Stokes 1999), I situate these performances in Vietnam within the broader context of globalization and the political economies of nostalgia in the 21st century.

Developing a "Travel Marketplace": The History of Tourism in Vietnam

The tourist industry in Vietnam has roots in the French colonial period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While the means of travel has radically changed over

the past century—from steamboats and guidebooks to jetliners and smart phone apps—the priorities and strategies of tourism largely remain the same. State and private organizations have capitalized upon travelers' desires for adventure by curating experiences marketed as authentic or exotic. For domestic tourists, these organizations appeal to a sense of patriotic or moral obligation to visit sites of national importance or value. Depending on the political situation in Vietnam, control over tourism has continually shifted between state influence and private enterprise investments. Despite these shifts, both private and state organizations have recognized the political and economic benefits of tourism.

In his discussion of the development of a "travel marketplace" in colonial Vietnam between the First and Second World Wars (1918-1940), historian Erich DeWald notes that the French colonial administration believed a international tourism industry in Indochina would not only encourage financial investment in the colony, but would also bolster France's "civilizing mission" ideology (DeWald 2008: 222-223). A 1925 edition of *La Presse Coloniale Illustrée* (Illustrated Colonial Press, a travel magazine published in Paris during the 1920s and 1930s) focused entirely on "Tourism in Indochina." The magazine devoted a 1925 issue to "Le Tourisme en Indochine" (Tourism in Indochina). The cover features a young Vietnamese woman in an áo dài (a traditional Vietnamese dress worn over loose-fitting trousers), standing in front of Hoàn Kiếm Lake in Hanoi (see figure 5.2). Inside of the magazine, a description of Hoàn Kiếm Lake reads: "on the small lake, a pagoda built on stilts rises among the lotus; one reaches it via a curved wooden bridge." (10)

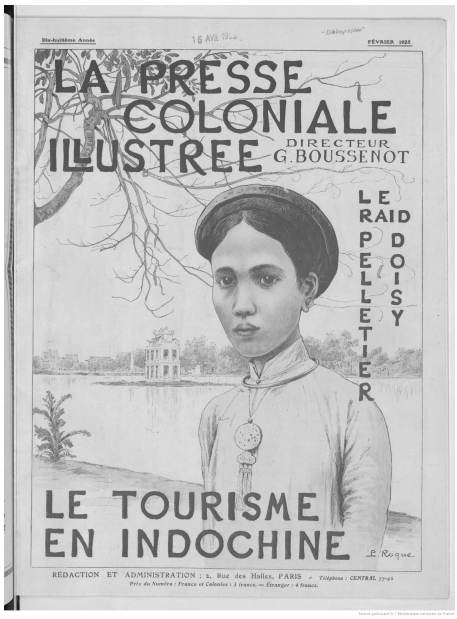

Figure 5.2: Cover of La Presse Coloniale Illustrée, February 1925.
Bibliothèque National de France.

Sites of natural beauty, cultural curiosity, and historical interest, including pagodas, temples, and the royal citadel in Huế were described in the 1925 "Tourism to Indochina" issue. Many of these were still in use for religious or royal purposes, which created conflicts of interest. As rituals in the imperial Huế temples were not intended to be open to the public, adjustments were made to adapt these rituals into spectacles for public consumption. For example, DeWald notes that the royal temple organized two separate performances of the Nam Giao offering ritual at the Nam Giao Esplanade: once as a closed ritual and the second as a display open to the public, including female observers of a typically gender restricted ceremony (ibid: 228).[25]

[25] The opening of the Nam Giao ritual to tourists in the 19th century set a precedent: a century later, the ritual continues to draw international tourists. In 1993, UNESCO recognized the Esplanade as a World Cultural Heritage site. Every April, the Nam Giao ritual is practiced for both domestic and foreign tourists as part of the Huế Festival (Van 2016).

Despite the popularity of these tourist sites, war and political upheaval throughout the twentieth century resulted in the decline of tourism. Following the end of the North-South war in 1975 and the subsequent establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the country entered a decade of relative isolation and economic hardship. Despite these difficulties, state tourist initiatives encouraged Vietnamese people to travel domestically. The Vietnamese National Administration of Tourism (*Tổng Cục Du Lịch*, with the English acronym VNAT), founded in 1978, centrally controlled the tourism industry, promoting several cities as destinations for domestic tourists (Truong and Le 2017: 192-193). Promoting a range of sites in all regions of the peninsula, the government worked to foster reconciliation between North and South Vietnam and to support a pan-Vietnamese cultural identity through travel.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam limited inbound international tourism was limited throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. It only admitted tourist nationals from other socialist member states of the Council for Mutual Assistance or COMECON (Suntikul et al. 2008: 70). One direct impact of this restricted international travel upon the arts was the incorporation of communist ideologies into Vietnamese musical institutions. One particularly influencial event was the arrival of *Radost* (Happiness), a Czech troupe performing hand-and-rod puppetry. Through Radost's visit, Hồ Chí Minh acknowledged the potential of Vietnamese water puppet theater to communicate communist ideology (particularly to children). During their trip, Radost gave a series of performances as well as educational workshops for chèo opera artists in Hanoi. After training with Radost,

these artists became the founding members of the Central Puppet Theater in Hanoi (later the Thang Long Water Puppet Theater), performing state-sanctioned plays for tourist audiences (Foley 2001: 134).

While the state continued to recognize the political potential of musical tourist entertainment, the introduction of Đổi Mới economic and political reforms in 1986 moved Vietnam towards a de-centralized, socialist economy. These new policies rapidly changed the tourism industry in Vietnam. As part of the political reforms of the Đổi Mới period, the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and a number of countries continually increased the number of foreign nationals eligible to apply for tourist visas to Vietnam. In 1989, Vietnam had diplomatic ties with 23 non-communist states; by 2007, that number had increased to 171 nations (Suntikul et al. 2008: 69). Following pressure from VNAT, Vietnam joined the 2002 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Tourism Agreement: legislation intended to encourage tourism among Southeast Asian nations. Along with new visa regulations, the Vietnamese state has also adopted several ordinances and laws to promote tourism. For example, the 2005 Law on Tourism 2005 recognized the economic potential of tourist dollars to alleviate poverty on local levels in Vietnam (Truong and Le 2017: 198). Over the past thirty years, legislation promoting foreign tourism has led to a boom of international tourists to Vietnam while at the same time encouraging financial investment in infrastructure.

While increasingly accessible and affordable travel within Vietnam has drawn foreign tourists, a rising Vietnamese middle class also spurred domestic

tourism. Since the 1990s, Vietnam's burgeoning economy provided more disposable income, resulting in a greater number of Vietnamese domestic tourists (Bui and Jolliffe 2011: 15). To promote domestic tourism, the state began a travel campaign with the slogan "Người Việt Nam du lịch Việt Nam - Mỗi chuyên đi thêm yêu Tổ quốc" (Vietnamese People Travel Vietnam – Every Trip Makes You Love the Country Better) (Truong and Le 2017: 202). This program, implemented in 2014-2015, focused on two strategies. While it encouraged Vietnamese to travel throughout the country (specifically to non-urban areas in the mountains and coastal provinces), the program also targeted Vietnamese nationals living abroad, urging them to return to travel Vietnam as an act of patriotism and cultural pride (ibid.). This appeal to "Việt Kiều" or overseas Vietnamese who left the country after 1975 to return to travel Vietnam is part of a larger movement to encourage foreign investment in post- đổi mới Vietnam.

While the state recognizes the economic benefits of both foreign and domestic tourism in Vietnam, government censors critique musical performances for their political and ideological potential. The Vietnamese Communist Party has historically drawn from the socialist realist policies of China and the Soviet Union, critiquing traditional art forms such as hát bội opera, hát văn spirit medium rituals, and ca trù singing as feudal or out of touch with the demands of modern society.[26] In the decades following the đổi mới reforms, however, the state renewed its interest

[26] Similarly, ethnomusicologist Frederick Lau notes how the Chinese Communist Party supported the emergence of *yangbanxi* "model opera" in the 1960s as an alternative to traditional opera, deemed "harmful to the new society because they were seen as products of Chinese feudal society." (2008: 136)

in genres such as hát bội theater as a response to growing concerns that free market politics and contact with western culture had corrupted Vietnamese society. A resolution passed during the eighth Vietnamese Communist Party Congress in 1998, "Building and Developing a Progressive Vietnamese Culture Rich in National Character," called for a return to traditional values as outlined by the state. Hát bội performance has the potential to stage these traditional values as determined by the state through plays with nationalist themes. These performances assert Vietnamese culture as distinct from the west through the use of Vietnamese musical instruments, including the đàn bầu. Theater scholar Khai Thu Nguyen observed that the Vietnamese Communist Party has "maintained its tight censorship of the political content and aesthetic form of performing arts production" since the 1998 resolution (K. Nguyen 2011: 201-202, 206). This censorship includes limiting art forms that challenge the state's values as well as supporting art that promotes these values.

One particularly significant way that the Vietnamese state controls artistic production is by sponsoring authorized, "official" versions of a particular genre. In the following section, I consider how UNESCO's politics of cultural preservation sustain state influence over the arts in Vietnam.

UNESCO and International Cultural Politics

By seeking recognition for Vietnamese art forms from international organizations such as UNESCO, the state not only controls artistic production but also controls a very specific image of Vietnamese culture globally. Ethnomusicologist Laura Adams

has demonstrated how UNESCO politics of cultural diversity and preservation sustain an elision of Tajik culture in Uzbekistan. Adams argues that "scholars, practitioners and national elites see UNESCO programmes as an opportunity to elevate and advertise some aspect of their *national* culture to the broader world. However, UNESCO programmes to preserve intangible cultural heritage inherently have the effect of changing the prestige structure within which *local* cultures are valued." (2013: 128)

Similarly, UNESCO's politics of cultural preservation sustain state influence over the arts in Vietnam, promoting local and regional musical forms as representative of the nation. UNESCO recognition changes the prestige of this "intangible cultural heritage" at the local level. The way these genres are marketed to tourists as representative of Vietnamese culture reflects this prestige economy. UNESCO recognition has a direct impact on marketing strategies in Vietnam's tourism industry. For example, *đờn cà tài tử*, a form of amateur chamber music from southern Vietnam, is the focus of a number of tourist initiatives since the genre's inscription as Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013.[27] In order to "protect and promote" the genre, the Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism has

[27] UNESCO lists several musical practices in Vietnam as intangible cultural heritage, including *nhã nhạc* court music and *Quan họ* folk singing from Bắc Ninh province recognition (both in 2009); the "space of gong culture" the construction and use of gongs in the Central Highlands of Vietnam in 2008; the worship of Hùng Kings in Phú Thọ province (2012) and Ví and Giam folk songs of the north-central provinces (2014). Vietnam also has two musical representations on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding: ca trù singing of northern Vietnam and Xoan worship singing in Phú Thọ province. In order for inclusion on the Urgent Safeguarding List, the nominating party must demonstrate that the practice cannot be expected to survive without immediate attention (UNESCO, "Intangible Heritage Vietnam: Elements on the List.")

sponsored a number of đờn cà tài tử festivals in southern Vietnam to showcase both nationally-recognized artists and smaller, local đờn cà tài tử clubs in the Mekong Delta region. In 2016, the Ministry of Sport, Culture and Tourism sponsored the first annual national đờn cà tài tử festival held in Bạc Liêu Province in the Mekong Delta region. To reach a wider audience with the second annual festival in Bình Dương during April 2017, the state has turned to television: the ministry will sponsor the broadcast of the opening and closing festival ceremonies, thus "serving audiences at home and abroad." (Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism 2017) These "audiences abroad" indicate that the Ministry intends, at least officially, to promote the festival in diaspora communities as well, a reminder of the "Vietnamese People Travel Vietnam" initiative.

While UNESCO recognition of đờn ca tài tử promotes the genre internationally as a symbol of Vietnamese culture, this recognition also grants the genre a certain level of domestic prestige. In the years following UNESCO recognition of đờn ca tài tử in 2013, the Vietnamese state has undertaken a variety of initiatives to promote the genre domestically. One such initiative was the broadcasting of *Tiếng Tơ Đồng, a* đờn ca tài tử television show filmed at the regional VTV Cần Thơ television studio in Ho Chi Minh City and aired on a state channel.[28] In the following section, I consider how *Tiếng Tơ Đồng* reflects the prestige structure of đờn ca tài tử as a UNESCO-recognized genre, crafting carefully controlled

[28] VTV (Vietnamese Television) is a series of state-funded networks with national and regional stations. The title of the program, *Tiếng Tơ Đồng,* acknowledges the materials—Tơ referring to silk and Đồng to copper or brass—that comprise (or have historically comprised) the genre's main instruments, such as the *đàn* kìm two string lute, đàn tranh sixteen string zither, and the đàn bầu (Huỳnh Khải and Huỳnh Minh Tâm 2016). *Tiếng* means "to sound." The title of the program thus translates to "The Sound of Silk and Metal."

performances structured by representatives from Vietnamese state musical institutions.

Tiếng Tơ Đồng

During a visit to the set in October 2015, I watched the *Tiếng Tơ Đồng crew film* "Buóc em đi" (I Step Away) a composition written Mr. Huỳnh Khải, professor at the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory and the program's host. "Buóc em đi" features the heterophonic texture typical of đờn ca tài tử. As a genre of amateur chamber music, đờn ca tài tử structure includes an unmetered, improvised prelude or a *rao.* Mr. Khai's "Buóc em đi" begins with a rao, during which the ensemble, a female vocalist accompanied by *đàn* kìm two-string lute and a slide guitar, introduce the song's modal framework. Musicians improvise around the *lòng bản*, a structural melody. A song lang clapper, sounded by the *đàn* kìm player, signals the metered section of "Buóc em đi." The musicians are free to simultaneously improvise upon the long ban structure, coming together as an ensemble at key structural points signaled by the song lang.

The ensemble had previously recorded *"*Buóc em đi*"* in a separate studio. During filming, this pre-recorded audio played back while the musicians sang and played along. *Tiếng Tơ Đồng* relies on playback to allow for multiple takes during filming. With pre-recorded audio and multiple filming takes, this đờn ca tài tử ensemble, including the đàn bầu, is visually and audibly "perfect." An amateur chamber music tradition adapted for state-sponsored television broadcast, *Tiếng Tơ Đồng* invites wider connections in the complex web of relationships between

institutionalized folk music and Vietnamese nationalism in the 21st century. Its artificial perfection, created for a television audience, contrasts sharply with the đờn ca tài tử performances I attended outside of the studio. In these more relaxed sessions, often around a dinner table after a good meal, musicians were free to drink beer, laugh, and stop and start songs as they pleased. While musicians play đờn ca tài tử in a variety of settings, none more "authentic" than the other, *Tiếng Tơ Đồng* presents a carefully controlled, staged version of đờn ca tài tử performance. The stakes of đờn ca tài tử performance are thus raised for broadcast—from a form of casual, local entertainment to a carefully choreographed performance and maintained image.

For *Tiếng Tơ Đồng* viewers, the program is a metaphorical nostalgic journey to an imagined past. The program features performances đờn ca tài tử filmed in a soundstage in front of a variety of backdrops, many depicting countryside or nature settings such as riverbanks, rice fields, beaches, or forests. When I brought up these settings to Mr. Huỳnh Minh Tâm, the station manager, he reminded me that đờn ca tài tử is particularly popular in the countryside and thus audiences associate this music with rural settings (Huỳnh Minh Tâm 2015).

This nostalgia is tinged with a sense of melancholy and loss, often amplified by đờn ca tài tử lyrics describing the sacrifices or pains of love. "Modern nostalgia is a mourning," describes literary scholar Svetlana Boym, "for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values…" (2001: 8). Within the context of *Tiếng Tơ Đồng*, nostalgia is a mourning for a

Vietnam of the past rooted in rural life, one without the buzz of motorbikes or the smog of city traffic.

Along with intangible cultural elements such as đờn cà tài tử, Vietnamese musical institutions also participate in the maintenance of UNESCO "World Heritage Sites." As the following section will discuss, Hội An Ancient Town, designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1999, is a prime example of musical tourism intersecting with the politics of cultural preservation.

Hội An Ancient Town

On November 9, 2015 I travel to Hội An by motorbike for a day trip. Navigating my way from the city center, I find the Ancient Town, a section of streets in the Minh An Ward of the city, approximately two square kilometers wide that borders the mouth of the Thu Bồn River with a concentration of restaurants, art galleries, clothing stores, and museums. The Ancient Town is developed for tourism. Cars, buses, and motorbikes are forbidden on its stone streets, making the Ancient Town ideal for the wandering pedestrian or cycling tourist (see figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Tourists shop for souvenirs in Hội An's Ancient Town.
November 9, 2015. Photo by the author.

Before it was a tourist destination, Hội An was historically an important port town. Between the 15th and 19th centuries in particular, the town's close proximity to the sea made Hoi An a center of domestic and foreign trade, catering to merchants from China, Japan, and Europe (Verrone 2002: 541-542). Economically and culturally vibrant, the architecture of Hội An demonstrated its syncretic community, including a Japanese-style bridge erected in the 18th century. Despite Hội An's prosperity, the shifting political climate of the French occupation led to the rise of Đà Nẵng as the primary port city in the early 19th century. In 1985, ten years after the reunification of North and South Vietnam, the state took interest in Hội An as a tourist destination, designating the old quarter of Hội An a "National Cultural Heritage Site" as part of a larger state initiative to encourage domestic tourism as a form of patriotism.

In 1999, UNESCO recognized this Ancient Town section of Hội An as a World Heritage Site due to its 17th and 18th century architecture and its preserved original street plan (UNESCO, "Hoi An Ancient Town"). According to UNESCO's report, the town is "an outstanding material manifestation of the fusion of cultures over time in an international commercial port" and an "exceptionally well-preserved example of a traditional Asian trading port." (ibid.)[29] As part of the Heritage Site Management plan agreement between UNESCO and Vietnam, tourism to Hội An Ancient Town is carefully directed towards specific areas and activities. According to the Viet Nam National Tourism Administration website, for an entrance fee, visitors may walk the car and motorbike-free streets of the Ancient Town, enjoying a variety of shops, restaurants, museums, and performances on offer (UNESCO, "Hoi An Ancient Town.") Musical entertainment is included in this entrance fee, providing tourists with a complimentary opportunity to visually and aurally participate in Vietnamese culture.

During my November visit to the Ancient Town, I enjoy the local specialty of cao lầu pork noodles for lunch before stopping in to see the Museum of Hoi An Folklore (Bảo tàng Văn hoá Dân gian) on 33 Nguyễn Thái Học Street. In 1998, the state renovated a former Chinese mercantile to house the museum as part of a larger campaign to develop Nguyễn Thái Học Street as a tourist destination (UNESCO 2008: 41). Since 2005, the museum houses displays of artifacts ranging

[29] Vietnam is home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites in total: two natural sites (Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park and Hạ Long Bay); five cultural sites (the complex of monuments in Huế, Hội An Ancient Town, Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary, the Imperial Citadel of Thăng Long in Hanoi, and the Citadel of the Hồ Dynasty), and one mixed site, the Tràng An Landscape Complex.

from pre-modern cooking utensils and textiles to sculptures, religious objects, and wedding costumes. In addition to these exhibits, visitors may attend performances of hát bội opera here nightly. Along with these performances, a prominent display of traditional instruments offers a substitute—if static—peek of musical life in Hội An. Walking into the museum, I immediately notice a đàn bầu on display, surrounded by đàn bầu technique books and CDs by đàn bầu artists for sale. The đàn bầu on display—electric, with steel strings—seemed to be an anachronism in a museum devoted to pre-industrial artifacts of life in Hội An. Two small stools and an open music stand, holding one of these technique books, along with a "Tip Box" prominently placed next to this display suggests that musicians perhaps perform the đàn bầu as demonstrations for visitors, as shown in figure 5.4. In the folklore museum, traditional instruments, despite their incorporation of twentieth century technologies, represent a Vietnamese musical past.

Figure 5.4: A đàn bầu on display at the Museum of Hoi An Folkore.
Photo by the author, November 9, 2015.

Hoping to hear a musical performance after visiting the museum, I walk across the Ancient Town to visit the Hội An Performance House of Traditional Arts (*Biểu diễn nghệ thuật cổ truyền Hội An*) on Bạch Đằng street for one of the afternoon concerts, squeezing into the back of the small, crowded auditorium just before the concert begins. The setting is a historical renovation of an old house in Hội An. The incorporation of traditional Vietnamese instruments and the costumes worn by the artists carefully provide the audience with an experience of the "ancient" culture of Hội An. The performance centers around an instrumental ensemble consisting of a đàn bầu, a đàn nhị two string spike fiddle; a đàn tam thập lục 36-string hammered dulcimer; a đàn tứ four-string plucked lute, a sáo flute, and a drum set (see figure 5.6). Accompanying various vocalists, the ensemble performs a variety of songs and dances from northern, central, and southern Vietnam. A female emcee dressed in a white áo dài introduces each piece in both Vietnamese and English and provides a short historical commentary. The visual aspects of each piece: from colorful costumes and props to expressive gestures provided further context for audience members unable to understand the Vietnamese lyrics of each song.

Figure 5.5: The performing ensemble of the Hội An Performance House of Traditional Arts.
The instruments are from left to right: đàn nhị, đàn tam thập lục, đàn bầu, đàn tứ, sáo, drumset. Photo by the author, November 9, 2015.

The performance also encourages audience participation, particularly during a round of *bài chòi*. The emcee describes to the English-speaking audience that bài chòi is a form of "Vietnamese bingo," a musical lottery game.[30] Originally a form of hunting entertainment, *hát bài chòi* became a theatrical genre during the 1930s in the central coast region of Bình Định province (P. Nguyễn 2008: 277). As a musical game, bài chòi draws upon a variety of folk song genres of northern and central Vietnam. The instrumentation of bài chòi is similar to that of hát bội opera, with a typical ensemble including a vocalist; chordophones such as the đàn bầu and đàn nhị two string fiddle; aerophones such the sáo flute and kèn oboe; and various percussion. Hát bài chòi is predominantly heterophonic. The vocalist's melody is mostly syllabic, with ornamentation on the ends of phrases only. The instrumental

[30] In Vietnamese, "bài" translates to cards or tokens, while "chòi" means sentry house. Vietnamese scholars suggest that bài chòi perhaps began as a form of entertainment among soldiers at their posts (Bích Liên 2003: 986-993).

ensemble provides a more rhythmically dense ornamentation. Songs are in strophic form, with each stanza announcing a new winner.

At the Hội An performance, I listen to the emcee describe the basic rules of the game while her assistant distributes cards to audience members. In bài chòi, the emcee explains, each card contains an image. During the game, the vocalist calls out a word matching an image on one of the cards, and the holder of the card wins a prize—in the case of this afternoon's performance, a colorful lantern. Following these instructions, the game begins, signaled by a drumroll. The ensemble plays an unmetered introduction, accompanying the vocalist. Following this short introduction, the group then launches into fast melody in duple meter. The đàn nhị and đàn bầu played simultaneous variations on the vocalist's melody while the sáo ornamented the end of each vocal line. The female vocalist, introduced as Ms. Lê Nghĩa (pictured in figure 5.6), begins to sing while selecting and then singing out the names of winning cards.

Figure 5.6: Vocalist Ms. Lê Nghĩa draws a winning image during a game of bài chòi at the Hội An Performance House.
Photo by the author, November 9, 2015.

The audience at the performance house responds warmly to bài chòi, clapping along with the music and cheering for the game's winners. During my visit, I notice that bài chòi is a common activity in Hội An Ancient Town. Walking through the square after dusk, for example, I come across another bài chòi performance in the open air, adjacent to one of the town's popular walking bridges. A large crowd gathers around the musical ensemble, vying for a look at the lottery game taking place in the square.

As I would discover after my visit, the prevelence of bài chòi in Hội An extends beyond the genre's translatability as "Vietnamese bingo" for foreign tourists. As of this writing (June 2017), bài chòi is under consideration for UNESCO recognition as an element of intangible cultural heritage. In 2014, the Vietnamese

Institute for Musicology published an "inventory" of bài chòi practices in nine provinces, as such data is required to apply for UNESCO consideration. The inventory explains that bài chòi singers, known as the "Hiệu," memorize *hô thai* verses from the bài chòi repertoire, each containing six and eight syllable sentences. The last sentence of each verse names the winning card. (Vietnamese Institute for Musicology 2015: 29). With this inventory, Vietnamese Institute for Musicology, along with the Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Bình Định Province intend to demonstrate the need to preserve bài chòi as an oral tradition of the Hiệu singers. Interestingly, the inventory did not include professional performances of bài chòi, choosing instead to highlight "folk" practitioners.

Through these performances in Hội An Ancient Town, a World Heritage Site, the Vietnamese state utilizes international UNESCO status to promote curated representations of Vietnamese culture. While UNESCO recognition provides rewards by bringing tourist dollars to specific locations such as Hội An, the political benefit of such recognition is also substantial, as UNESCO status lends an air of prestige to state versions of Vietnamese history. The endorsement lends a further air of urgency. According to a 2008 report on the impact of World Heritage status in Hội An, UNESCO noted that the conservation of intangible heritage in the area has become more important as the tourist economy influences the lifestyle of local residents. "Recognizing the value of intangible heritage as a basis for community life and as an attraction for tourists," the report notes, "some cultural practices, such as festivals and artistic performances, have been revived by local authorities for the benefit of the residents and tourists." (UNESCO 2008: 42) While UNESCO does not

officially recognize either what the benefits of these "revivals" may be for residents and tourists or how the conferral of "intangible culture" status may privilege art forms considered worth preserving by the state.

Reflecting on his involvement with UNESCO, anthropologist Anthony Seeger notes that the organization is hardly a monolith, with complex layers of bureaucracy at both the international and national levels. Seeger thus calls for ethnographies that examine the specificities of how UNESCO operates on local, state, and international levels (2015: 140). Scholars respond to Seeger's call for close readings in a collection of case studies, *UNESCO on the Ground: Local Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2015). In this volume, folklorist Michael Dylan Foster suggests viewing UNESCO as a "brand" more than a set bureaucratic system. Analyzing the Intangible Cultural Heritage inscription of the Toshidon "visiting diety" ritual of Kyushu Island in Japan, Foster observed that this UNESCO status was "valuable in branding the island as a unique destination, regardless of whether one actually gets a chance to see the ritual itself" (2015: 87-88). For visitors to Kyushu Island, the ideas of Toshidon circulated by tourist companies, government agencies, and through UNESCO are enough to bring visitors to the island.

UNESCO status operates similarly in Vietnam. As one of the five facets of tourism in the Viet Nam National Tourism Administration's "Timeless Charm" marketing campaign, the "cultural and historical tourism" sector encompasses all of the destinations associated with UNESCO recognition. The "World Heritage in Viet Nam" section of VNAT's website features an interactive map, where visitors can learn more about UNESCO World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage sites

throughout Vietnam. On the "World Heritage" map, VNAT markets Hội An Ancient Town as a visit to the past, magically frozen in time. "What is special about Hoi An" the description begins, "is that this little port town is in an incredible state of preservation" (VNAT, "World Heritage in Vietnam: Hoi An Ancient Town"). By making culture and history a destination, VNAT is able to use UNESCO status as a brand, offering Vietnamese history and culture as a consumable product.

In Vietnam, UNESCO status is related to developing a tourist economy, but is also intimately connected to larger issues of musical institutionalization, nationalism, and cultural politics in the socialist republic. These issues are not limited to the frame of UNESCO recognition, however. As the following section investigating an urban performance of water puppet theater (*múa rối nước)* will demonstrate, the Vietnamese state has an established history of employing music for nationalist agendas to domestic and international tourists. Performances at the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater in Hanoi use music to express political and cultural values.

Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater (Nhà hát múa rối Thăng Long)

In the center of Hanoi, Hoàn Kiếm—the Lake of the Returned Sword—is the epicenter of bustling activity for tourists and locals alike in the city's Old Quarter. According to legend, the 11th century emperor Lê Thái Tổ (founder of the city today known as Hanoi) encountered the Golden Turtle God while boating on the lake. The deity asked the emperor to return the magic sword previously bequeathed upon him from a god to fight off his enemies. Graciously, the Emperor gave the sword to

the Golden Turtle God and renamed the lake Hoàn Kiếm to commemorate the occasion (Asia Pacific Travel, n.d).

Today, tourists to Hoàn Kiếm watch re-enactments of this legend at the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater, located on the north end of the lake. The Thăng Long ("Flying Dragon") Theater is a popular stop for foreign tourists who can enjoy an hour-long cultural presentation in the comfort of an air-conditioned theater for for 60,000 VND (approximately $3 US). Founded in 1969, the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater entertains audiences from around the world with brightly lacquered puppets gliding effortlessly on the water. The staging of *múa rối nước* ("puppets who dance on the water") is particularly unique. The genre borrows stories and music from *hát chèo* folk theater of northern Vietnam and, like hát chèo, múa rối nước relies on stock characters and set pieces, similar to the Italian *commedia dell'arte* tradition. Troupes convey these set pieces through musical numbers, in the style of hát chèo. An ensemble typically including a đàn bầu, đàn nguyệt two-string lute, đàn tranh, đàn tam thập lục dulcimer, đàn nhị spike fiddle, sáo flute, and various percussion accompany the puppets. Songs typically feature the same structure of a repeated melody with rhythmic and dynamic variations, preceded by unmetered introduction and followed by a conclusion (Phong T. Nguyen 2008: 273).

Over the course of the 20th century, water puppet theater performance adapted from a form of village entertainment to an urban theatrical genre. Múa rối nước has roots in the Red River Delta of northern Vietnam, performed in nine provinces by a number of artists' guilds (*phường*) (Foley 2001: 130). Throughout the 1970s, theater artists studying and working in state institutions traveled to

villages in the Red River Delta to study múa rối nước with different phuong. Central Theater artists brough these regional practices back to urban centers, but changed elements of performance practice to meet state demands.

The institutionalization of đàn bầu is connected to the institutionalization of water puppet theater. After graduating from the Institute of Puppetry in Prague, puppeteer Ngô Quỳnh Giao returned to Vietnam and combined practices from two villages to create a different style of water puppet performance in Hanoi. One of Ngô Quỳnh Giao's innovations was to include more musical accompaniment, performed by graduates of Vietnamese musical instittuions rather than by amateur musicians (ibid). Forty years later, this is still a common practice. Vietnamese-American musician Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ recalls that after graduating from the Vietnamese Academy of Music in the 1990s, she regularly performed at the Thăng Long Theater (Võ 2017). The urbanized, institutionalized version of water puppet theater performance is still performed today at the Thăng Long Theater.

On September 21, 2015, I attended an afternoon performance at the Thăng Long Theater. As the audience of approximately two hundred people filled the theater, I overheard other visitors speaking English, Italian, Japanese, and French. As the lights dimmed, a pre-recorded introduction welcomed audiences to the theater in French, Vietnamese, and English. "Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen," a male announcer greeted the audience in English. "To start the show, we'd like you to enjoy the piece of music which is titled "Lên Ngàn" (Going Together) presented by artist Nguyễn Thành." In the Vietnamese-language introduction, a female announcer added that "Lên Ngàn" was composed by Hoàng Việt and would feature the đàn bầu.

Following a round of applause, the piece began with a short, slow introduction by the đàn tam thập lục dulcimer and sáo flute. As the đàn bầu entered, I noticed a flurry of camera flash bursting in the audience, as spectators craned to get a look at the instrument. The đàn bầu artist, Nguyễn Thành (pictured in figure seven) played a slow, unmetered introduction, beginning in the instrument's low register. This introduction highlighted the pitch-bending ability of the đàn bầu, as Nguyễn Thành ornamented almost every note with microtonal vibrato. Following this introduction, the drum set and auxiliary percussion signaled the beginning of a second section, faster and in a duple meter. The ensemble repeated this faster section twice, accelerating in tempo during the final repeat. Throughout, the đàn bầu embellished the introductory melody with rapidly slurred grace notes, building to a climax in the instrument's higher register. Nguyễn Thành stood to take a bow as the audience burst into applause. The spotlight now shifted to the pool, as the water puppet performance began.

Figure 5.7: The instrumental ensemble of the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater performs "Lên Ngàn," featuring a đàn bầu soloist Nguyễn Thành.
Photo by the author, September 21, 2015.

Besides opening the performance with a virtuosic display, this instrumental rendition of "Lên Ngàn" also held political significance. The song's composer, Hoàng Việt (1928-1967) was a celebrated composer of *tân nhạc* or "new music," a broad musical form emergent in the 1930s that combined elements of western music (staff notation and western instrumentation, for example) with Vietnamese instruments and musical idioms such as improvised ornamentation, pentatonic modes, and microtonal embellishments (Henry 2005). One of the most celebrated tân nhạc composers of his generation, Hoàng Việt studied composition in Bulgaria in the early 1960s. Returning to South Vietnam, he then wrote Vietnamese musicians consider the first Vietnamese symphony, "Quê Hương" (Homeland) in 1965 (ibid.). In 1967, Hoàng Việt was killed during an air raid. Today, Hoàng Việt is remembered for his songs written during the early 1960s, in particular "Tình ca," "Nhạc rừng," and "Lên Ngàn." Along with his sad love songs, the composer's early death at age 39

lends a further air of tragedy to his memory.

Months later when I returned to California, I would ask my đàn bầu teacher Vũ Hồng Thịnh about the composer. “If he hadn’t died so young,” Mr. Thịnh said, “I think he would have written many more famous pieces.” While musicians like Mr. Thịnh may remember Hoàng Việt as a famous Vietnamese composer who died tragically young, the Vietnamese state has also cast Hoàng Việt as a martyr and patriot. The choice of “Lên Ngàn” as an introduction to the water puppet show performance, featuring a đàn bầu soloist, is thus a curious choice. For Vietnamese audience members familiar with Hoàng Việt, the choice of “Lên Ngàn” as a musical introduction could be heard as a political statement. For foreign audience members, however, “Lên Ngàn” is more comprehensible as a demonstration of the virtuoisic capabilities of a uniquely Vietnamese monochord.

For foreign audience members, the vignettes presented by the puppets offer a more translatable statement on Vietnamese history. Reflecting on the compilation of legends and histories that shape performances at the Thăng Long Theater, theater and dance scholar Kathy Foley observed three structural elements: “a reminder of the agrarian base of the country, a review of Vietnamese success in throwing out colonial aggressors, and an affirmation of current stability and prosperity” (2001: 136). Individual scenes in the performance support these three elements. A scene depicting a young boy riding a water buffalo, for example, is a reminder of rural life. A battle scene, usually representing pre-modern Vietnamese soldiers fighting off Chinese invaders, demonstrates past military successes. Foley notes that the military scene serves as a reminder to audiences (both foreign and domestic) that

Vietnam has "continually defeated richer and more powerful foes" (ibid.: 138). Meanwhile, the presence of the four sacred creatures of Vietnamese mythology—the phoenix, unicorn, dragon, and tortoise—symbolize the strength and promise of the nation. The dances of the phoenix and fairies to the return of the sword to the Golden Turtle may be read as a metaphor for a victorious Vietnamese state in the 20th century. As the Golden Turtle reclaimed a sword given to Lê Thái Tổ to fight off invaders threatening his kingdom, this divine act symbolized the formation of a unified, protected state (ibid.).

While the Vietnamese Communist Party has historically criticized art forms for incorporating elements of superstition and the supernatural throughout the twentieth century (see K. Nguyen 2011), it is notable that in the context of the water puppet show, these elements strengthen a history of the Vietnamese nation from myth to present. In her reading of Soviet teleology, Svetlana Boym noted that Marxist-Lenninist historiography incorporated past events as the natural "forerunner and legitimizer of the revolution" (2001: 59). In a similar vein, the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater incorporates legendary figures, such as the Golden Turtle, to shape a telelogical history of the Vietnamese nation.

This state-sanctioned history, presented as a form of musical entertainment, has reached a larger audience following the political and economic đổi mới reforms of the 1980s. While new visa policies increased the number of tourists to Vietnam, thereby augmenting the visability and reach of state organizations such as the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater, these same policies also gradually made space for smaller, private entrerprises to find their niche within the tourism industry. In

the following section, I will explore how a family of musicians has engaged with the tourism industry on an individual, local level.

21st Century Entrepreneurship: A Private Musical Tour

During fieldwork in 2015, a contact in Hanoi had suggested that if I wanted to learn more about the đàn bầu, I should arrange to meet with Mr. Hoàng Anh upon my arrival in Ho Chi Minh City. A professional đàn bầu musician, Mr. Anh traveled the world with his mother and father, Ms. Minh Vượng and Mr. Hoàng Thịnh, performing a wide variety of Vietnamese traditional music genres. Mr. Thịnh plays several instruments, including the đàn bầu and đành trống drumset, while Ms. Vượng is an accomplished vocalist and also plays the *k'lông pút*, a bamboo xylophone of the Bahnar minority group.

After offering iced coffees and chatting about the nature of my interest in the dan bau, Mr. Anh offered to play a selection of pieces on the đàn bầu, each demonstrating a particular region or style. Following a song from the chèo opera repertoire of northern Vietnam, he played the 1970 hit "Let it Be" by the Beatles to demonstrate the instrument's ability to play contemporary music. He then contrasted a piece of court music from imperial Huế in central Vietnam to a selection from nhạc tài tử to highlight the "sweet, singing style" of southern Vietnamese music. He closed the private concert with "More Than I Can Say," a song popularized by American singer Bobby Vee in 1961.

This impromptu concert was not the first time Mr. Anh had performed for visitors in his home. Beginning in 1989, the Hoàng family agreed to host small

groups of tourists on dedicated cultural outings organized by the Saigon Tourist Company and later the Indochina Tourism Company and the Viet Travel Company. Working with these various businesses, the format was largely the same. As a "stop" on one of these art tours (in between visits to to painters' workshops and handicraft studios), the Hoàngs would welcome a small group of approximately five to seven people into their home (Hoàng Anh, personal interview 2015). After greeting the guests, they would introduce their instruments and provide short demonstrations, with the help of an interpreter. Guests would be welcome to try the instruments themselves, with the guidance of Mr. Anh and his parents. After this "hands-on" experience, the Hoàngs would perform a short concert, including a selection of pieces representative of each region of Vietnam along with popular songs familiar to the guests (e.g., Beatles' tunes). "This way, the audience can learn about Vietnamese culture," he explained.

Later, over follow-up correspondence via my interpreter, Ms. Hồ Hằng, Mr. Anh clarified that his family would present homophonic or polyphonic renditions of these pieces ("using one musical part or two musical parts") so that tourists would find the music more accessible (Hồ Hằng, personal communication 2016). While these personal music tours were well received by guests, the companies with which the Hoàngs have collaborated have mostly discontinued their cultural tours due to lack of profitability (ibid.)

Mr. Anh is currently planning to host musical tours of his home again, this time with the assistance of Ms. Hằng. Eight months after our initial meeting with Mr. Anh, Ms. Hồ Hằng and I met again over steaming bowls of chicken *phở*, where she pulled

out her smartphone to show me a new travel app—Triip.me. Capitalizing on travelers' desire to have a more "authentic" local experience, the app provides a platform for individuals to create and market their own personalized tours while offering travelers an alternative to pre-packaged trips. "The happiest way to enjoy truly local experiences in 98 countries," the site promises (Triip Pte. Ltd. 2017). These "truly local" experiences emphasize small groups and one one-on-one interactions. Along with tours in Ho Chi Minh City, the Mekong Delta region, Hue, and Hanoi, Triip.me also boasts tours from cities such as Montreal, Berlin, and New York City to the the Himalayan country of Bhutan. "Scrolling down the app on her phone, Ms. Hằng showed me examples of tours on offer in Ho Chi Minh City: a cooking lesson and meal in a private family home, a motorbike tour of local landmarks, and a food tour highlighting small street vendors. Technologies like the Triip.me app challenge the "three key determinants of access" model of tourism (Suntikul et al. 2008: 70). Although the state continues to control border permeability (one of the three determinants), the internet provides an alternative infrastructure and marketing platform. Through the Triip.me app, tour hosts determine which destinations, food stalls, or music venues will appeal to visitors. As tourists review and rate their experiences, successful homespun tours gain prestige.

Ms. Hằng had the idea to use the Triip.me app to develop a music tour in Ho Chi Minh City, bringing tourists into individual musicians' homes and studios for private concerts. Weeks after I left Ho Chi Minh City, she and Mr. Anh met at a café to discuss the details. After their meeting, Ms. Hằng sent me detailed notes of their meeting, highlighting logistical details such as Mr. Anh's performance fee

(approximately $120-145 USD per hour); his vision for the size and scope of the tour visit (4-6 guests for approximately 1-2 hours), and his ideas about potential audiences. For example, Mr. Anh suggested that Ms. Hằng contact Japanese tourists, she wrote, "because Japan is a developed country with advanced technology. Japan is a wealthy country, so they are willing to spend money on exploring and enjoying art and culture." (Hồ Hang, personal communication 2016) Along with contacting Japanese visitors, Ms. Hằng planned to market her tour to English, French, and Korean speaking tourists, as she believed this would reach the widest audience possible.

As of spring 2017, Ms. Hằng is still working through the logistics of her tour. The greatest obstacle, she noted, is how to offer a small, intimate musical experience at an affordable price. Ms. Hằng and I continue to correspond over email, considering other locations on a musical tour that would be both enjoyable and affordable for foreign audiences. While it remains to be seen what will come of Ms. Hằng's privately organized music tour via the Triip.me app, new technologies are changing the ways that individual entrepreneurs and musicians create and market their own services to tourists.

Conclusion

From pagoda tours marketed towards French tourists to water puppet theater performances imbued with communist ideology, cultural tourism has been an important market in Vietnam, directed towards tourists both foreign and domestic. Musical performances are a large component of the tourism industry. As a form of

cultural production as well as entertainment, music is intimately connected to a variety of state policies concerning both domestic and foreign tourists. As a "brand," UNESCO recognition has a direct impact on tourism in Vietnam: from the nostalgic trips to the past shaped on the television program *Tiếng Tơ Đồng* to the curated displays of musical instruments and genres as "ancient" in the UNESCO "World Heritage Site" of Hội An.

Outside the realm of UNESCO, the state and individual entrepreneurs draw upon a variety of strategies to draw visitors including linguistic, geographical, and aesthetic accessibility, for both political and economic ends. Musical tourism frames an imagined past through carefully curated performances of Vietnamese culture. As Eric Hobsbawm notes, "inventing traditions…is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition" (1983: 4). The state supports an official version of Vietnamese tradition through formal and ritualized performances at the Thăng Long Water Puppet Theater four times a day in Hanoi. Performances enact the legends of heroes from antiquity to present visual and aural images of a historically grounded, victorious state.

Musical tourism draws upon the cultural capital of the past to market Vietnamese culture to foreign and domestic audiences. Bourdieu identifies cultural capital value imbued on an aesthetic form (e.g., a style of painting, a music genre, or a form of literature) through popular and state discourse (1984). According Bourdieu, the cultural capital of objects is established through a process of "cultural consecration… a sort of ontological promotion akin to a transubstantiation" (1984:

6). “Consecrated” as the national instrument of Vietnam, the đàn bầu is able to physically represent the past because of the cultural discourse surrounding the instrument as pre-modern, traditional, and inherently Vietnamese.

Individual musicians, such as Mr. Hoàng Anh in Ho Chi Minh City, are able to draw on the cultural capital of the đàn bầu through their involvement in the tourism industry. Mr. Anh carefully considers his audiences’ expectations: from introductory “hands on” sessions with Vietnamese instruments to to renditions of the Beatles’ “Let it Be” on the đàn bầu, he navigates the aesthetic demands of intimate tourist performances.

As these examples demonstrate, the đàn bầu plays an important role in the globalized tourism industry of Vietnam. The đàn bầu itself has also traveled throughout the world over the course of the 20th century, as a result of the Vietnamese diaspora. The following two chapters will further consider the cultural history of the đàn bầu on an international scale.

Chapter Six. Adaptability, Experimentation, and Change: The Đàn Bầu Monochord in the Diaspora

Music is a method of personal as well as political expression in the Vietnamese diaspora, with musicians drawing upon their art to explore the intersections between familial, cultural, and creative identities. Political instability and threat of violence after the end of the war in 1975 led approximately 1.6 million Vietnamese to flee the country in waves (Miller 2015). Today, the global Vietnamese diaspora comprises approximately four million people, half of who reside in the United States (ibid.). Australia, Canada, and countries in Western and Central Europe are also home to large Vietnamese communities outside of Southeast Asia.

In one of the first monographs to investigate music of the Vietnamese diaspora, *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free: Music and the Vietnamese Refugee Experience,* Adelaida Reyes traces the trajectory of the Vietnamese refugee experience: from camps of first asylum in the Philippines to resettlement centers at military bases in the United States to new a new Vietnamese American community in New Jersey (1999).[31] In each context, Reyes considers how the Vietnamese performers and audiences make music to navigate interweaving cultural, national, and personal identities. In her fieldwork, Reyes observed that musicians carefully temporally and

[31] Government persecution of Vietnamese of Chinese heritage resulted in further displacement: in 1977 approximately 15,000 Vietnamese refugees sought asylum in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines; 70% of this number were ethnic Chinese (UNCHR 2000: 81-82). Economic and political refugees continued to flee Vietnam, as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam sent anyone associated with the US or the South Vietnamese government to "re-education" camps (see Tran Tri Vu 1988, Đinh Ngọc Quể 2000, and Lê Hứu Tri 2001).

politically distanced themselves from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, instead cultivating and developing a shared repertoire of songs associated with South Vietnam.

This chapter focuses on specific case studies of music making in the Australian and Canadian diasporas. It opens by highlighting the role of music in community gatherings, exploring how music making reflects the political concerns of particular organizations in the diaspora. Within this context, the đàn bầu is a focal point for examining the ways musicians and audiences interact with the instrument as a marker of Vietnamese identity. Here, I draw upon Jennifer Post's work with Kazakh communities in Western Mongolia exploring how musicians use the *dombra* lute to define their community and to separate themselves from and to resist the dominant culture. Post notes that Kazakhs living in Mongolia maintain "a sense of national identity and pride" while at the same time being part of a transnational community rooted in Mongolia (2007: 47) Building on Post's framework, in this chapter I focus the work of specific đàn bầu artists and the contexts in which they perform, arguing that musicians draw upon the monochord to represent both national and transnational identities.

Within the context of the Australian and Canadian Vietnamese diasporas đàn bầu performances offer unique insight into the current political, cultural, and aesthetic priorities of musicians and their audiences. As a uniquely Vietnamese instrument, specifically distinct from Chinese musical influences, the đàn bầu is a powerful symbol of national identity in Vietnam and its diasporas. The đàn bầu also has an established pre-colonial and pre-communist era history. Diaspora artists

connect the đàn bầu with this history to perform a Vietnamese cultural identity distinguished from the current political order of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

While the oeuvre of each artist is vibrantly diverse, musicians in the diaspora tend to take either an experimental, "fusion" approach blending western and Vietnamese musical idioms or a traditional, "preservation" approach focusing on the representation of Vietnamese culture. Ethnomusicologists have noted how musicians use stereotypes or strategic essentialisms differently when performing for inter- and intra-cultural audiences (Savaglio 1996; Silverman 2012; Wong 2013). Considering the work of Vietnamese diaspora musicians, I discuss the musical vocabularies, marketing strategies, and performance practices musicians draw upon to situate their work for Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese audiences.

For Vietnamese Australians, the đàn bầu is a connection to the past, a celebration of the present, and a vehicle for future possibilities. The first case study is the 2016 Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music, hosted by the University of Adelaide in Australia. This festival brought Vietnamese Australian musicians across the continent together for concerts, symposia, and workshops. While a variety of cultural activities are sponsored by regional chapters of the Vietnamese Community in Australia (VCA) organization, the festival in Adelaide specifically focused on showcasing and preserving Vietnamese traditional music performance as part of Australia's wider cultural tapestry. Through an analysis of a festival performance of Hue court music, I demonstrate how the Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music in Australia strategically draws upon traditional genres to carefully negotiate

performance politics in the diaspora, avoiding music associated with the contemporary Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Beyond the festival culture, the work of two individual artists based in Melbourne is relevant to how Vietnamese Australian musicians use the đàn bầu to articulate intersecting cultural identities. Vietnamese-born composers and multi-instrumentalists, Lê Tuấn Hùng and Đặng Kim Hiền are both trained in Vietnamese traditional music performance with degrees from state conservatories. Both artists are invested in showcasing Vietnamese instruments but via experimentation with new musical avenues. Since moving to Australia in 1994, they have experimented with combining Vietnamese instruments with western art and popular music idioms, utilizing extended techniques and new technologies. In analyses of Đặng Kim Hiền's works "Melodia Nostalgica" (2013) and "On a Quivering String" (2005), I demonstrate how the composer draws upon extended đàn bầu techniques to reflect upon the past (exploring her sonic memories of Vietnam) and express her present feelings as a working mother in Australia.

The Vietnamese diaspora in Canada provides a useful comparison to Australia. The tenth annual lunar New Year *Tết* festival sponsored by the Vietnamese Association of Toronto is an example of how a diaspora community celebrates the intersections of Vietnamese and Canadian cultural identity through the performance of South Vietnamese and Canadian national anthems. Ethnomusicologist J. Martin Daughtry has argued that anthems are a "polysemous text through which national identity is constantly being negotiated." (2003: 42) At the Toronto Tết festival, participants continue to negotiate hyphenated national

identities through the singing of two anthems, both of which take on new meanings through juxtaposition.

Secondly, I focus on the activities of two Vietnamese Canadian đàn bầu musicians, Khắc Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích, a married couple who have resided in Toronto since 1992. Performing as "Khắc Chí Bamboo Music," both musicians have provided educational programs about Vietnamese culture in Canadian elementary schools, a component of the country's multiculturalism policies. In addition, as a composer and performer Hoàng Ngọc Bích is actively involved with the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra (VICO), a Vancouver-based ensemble comprised of instruments from European, Asian, and other cultures. In 2016, Hoàng Ngọc Bích wrote *River of Memories* for đàn bầu soloist and the VICO ensemble. *River of Memories* is based on the Hoàng Ngọc Bích's aural remembrances of Vietnamese aquatic landscapes. While the piece is an articulation of the composer's Vietnamese identity, its performance with an ensemble of Chinese, Persian, and western instruments politically and culturally frames *River of Memory* within the context of Canadian multiculturalism.

From lunar New Year celebrations and traditional music festivals to recordings and concerts featuring experimental đàn bầu compositions, music-making plays a central role in the Vietnamese diaspora. The đàn bầu allows musicians to express Vietnamese culture while reflecting on the specific political and personal experiences of life in the diaspora. In festival gatherings, musicians and audiences use the đàn bầu to foster community around a shared Vietnamese heritage and to bring visibility to these communities within the dominant culture.

Australia

The Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia

On October 16, 2016, the Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia, hosted by the University of Adelaide, welcomed artists from Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, and Adelaide for a day long event featuring guest speakers, workshops, and demonstrations. The festival culminated in an evening concert featuring a variety of performances, including Hue court music, nhạc tài tử chamber music, Vietnamese popular songs, and western art music performed on Vietnamese instruments. A poster for the festival advertised "a unique show case of Vietnamese traditional music in the Australian context." (see figure 6.1)

Figure 6.1: Poster for the inaugural Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music in Australia concert, held at the University of Adelaide, South Australia on October 16, 2016.
(Poster from the Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music in Australia 2016 homepage.)

A YouTube video created by festival organizers presents a medley of Huế court music performed that evening. The festival's emcee, Ms. Thái Phụng, announces the medley, "Lưu thủy, Kim Tiền, Xuân Phong, Long Hổ" ("Flowing Water, Golden Coins, Spring Wind, and Dragon and Tiger"), and explains to the audience that they are about to hear "classical court music." (Nguyen 2016) Following this introduction, the video then pans to an ensemble comprised of six đàn tranh zithers, one đàn bầu, two sáo bamboo flutes, and percussion (*trống* drum, *phách tiền* coin clappers, and *tách* tea cups). The video description (in both Vietnamese and English) credits each performer, noting that all are from Australian cities (ibid). Ensemble musicians are dressed in brightly colored áo dài, the traditional long dress for women and loose-fitting tunic for men worn over trousers. The medley begins as the ensemble launches into "Lưu thủy" (Flowing Water) presenting a homophonic rendition followed by a more densely ornamented version during a repeat. The video pans to the audience: several viewers are recording the performance on smart phones and tablets. A scrolling title in the video then lets the viewer at home know the ensemble is moving to "Kim Tiền" (Golden Coins) played at a slightly faster tempo also in duple meter. In "Kim Tiền," "Xuân Phong" (Spring Wind), and then "Long Hổ" (Dragon and Tiger), a continuously accelerating tempo and syncopated rhythms provide variation throughout variations on the same melodic structure (ibid.). The ensemble finishes the medley, greeted by warm applause, the video caption thanks the viewer for watching and provides information about the Centre for Studies of Vietnamese Music.

This medley of Huế court music presented Vietnamese traditional music to Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese audiences. According to the festival website, the organizers' goal for the event was to "share the knowledge and talents of the artists, researchers, and the public with the Vietnamese community and the mainstream Australian community, especially young people," as well as to "[preserve and develop] Vietnamese traditional music throughout Australia, continuing a tradition that has been formed and developed for almost five thousand years, [and] to contribute the beauty of Vietnamese music culture into Australia's rich and varied music culture." (Festival of Vietnamese Music 2016). Festival organizers worked to gain recognition for Vietnamese diaspora musicians, to promote Vietnamese culture among young people in the diaspora, and to contribute to Australian musical culture while simultaneously maintaining a distinct Vietnamese identity. The Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia was thus a careful negotiation, appealing to both Vietnamese audiences while also appealing to non-Vietnamese audience members.

As the event poster noted (see figure 6.1), the festival concert focused on Vietnamese music in "the Australian context." This Australian context included an emphasis on showcasing Australia-based musicians, rather than guest artists from Vietnam. In celebrating the contributions of the Vietnamese community to Australian culture, the conscious and advertised decision to focus on Vietnamese-Australian artists similarly distanced the festival politically from Vietnam.

While the festival positions Vietnamese Australians as part of Australian society as a whole, it similarly emphasizes the importance of maintaining Vietnamese cultural heritage. As anthropologist James Clifford notes, "peoples

whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be 'cured' by merging into a new national community" (1994: 307). By promoting Vietnamese songs and dances, the Festival of Vietnamese Music rejects historical erasure while simultaneously establishing the importance of Vietnamese culture to Australian society.

The performance of Huế court music by an ensemble of Vietnamese Australian artists is a political statement, a celebration of Vietnamese culture, and an acknowledgement of the contributions of the Vietnamese community to Australian society. Australia is home to the fourth largest Vietnamese population in the world according to a 2006 Australian census (Ben-Moshe and Pyke 2012: 19). The largest population of Vietnamese migrants arrived in Australia from 1975 until the late 1980s, many having escaped the country by boat as political refugees. Vietnamese migration to Australia continued after 1985, primarily consisting of Vietnamese joining family members already established abroad. From the 1990s to the present, Vietnamese continue to migrate to Australia to reunite with family members or as part of skilled migrant worker programs (Thomas 2005: 1142). The Vietnamese-Australian population is largely concentrated in urban centers. As seen in figure 6.2, the cities with the largest Vietnamese populations are predominantly in coastal southeastern and south Australia, including the city of Adelaide.

Figure 6.2: Political map of Australia.
Cites with large Vietnamese communities are circled.
Open source map: http://www.mapsopensource.com/australia-political-map-black-and-white.html

The Vietnamese population in Australia is not politically homogenous; more recent migrants to Australia have different relationships to the contemporary state of Vietnam. However, a historical legacy of animosity towards communist Vietnam strongly influences political, social, and cultural activities in the diaspora. As media scholars Stuart Cunningham and Tina Nguyen observed in their study of popular music consumption in Vietnamese Australian communities in Brisbane, many listeners "reject the output of the 'homeland' [Vietnam] as fatally compromised through production under a Communist regime" (1999: 72). Cunningham and Nguyen argue that as result, audiences rejecting "compromised" music turned to genres and artists active before 1975, such as those showcased in the widely popular "Paris By Night" music video series (ibid: 81-83). In a similar way, audiences interacting with a melody of Huế court melodies are able to celebrate

Vietnamese culture without directly engaging politically or musically with contemporary Vietnam. Additionally, it is a repertoire that Vietnamese audiences identify as belonging to a pre-communist era.

The Australian state played an active role in the presentation of the Festival, with institutional support provided by the University of Adelaide. Mr. Dang-Thao Nguyen, a guitarist and local high school teacher, organized the festival with co-convener ethnomusicologist Stephen Knopoff, who facilitated institutional support as a professor in the Elder Conservatorium of Music at University of Adelaide (Nguyen 2017). Mr. Dang-Thao Nguyen hopes to organize another Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia during 2017 in Melbourne, but as of this writing is still searching for a local co-convener who can assist with institutional support (personal communication, March 27, 2017).

The mission of the Festival of Vietnamese Music—to "contribute the beauty of Vietnamese music culture into Australia's rich and varied music culture" echoes that of the government's "Multicultural Australia" statement, which emphasizes that: "Sharing our cultural heritage is part of celebrating what it means to be Australian and helping everyone to feel included in our society" (Australian Government 2017: 15). The "Multicultural Australia" statement is a conscious counter to a historical legacy of xenophobic, reactionary legislation in the late 19th century creating a restrictive immigration quota against Asian migrants, collectively referred to as the "White Australia Policy." The Racial Discrimination Act of 1975 overturned the "White Australia" immigration policies, and Australia accepted thousands of Vietnamese refugees throughout the late 1970s and 1980s. However,

these new Vietnamese Australians faced the resulting cultural ramifications from decades of the "White Australia Policy." Anthropologist Mandy Thomas notes that prevailing misconceptions about Vietnamese refugees, along with images of the Vietnam War in mass media, led to "homogeneous and static" stereotyping of Vietnamese and Vietnamese culture in Australian society (2005: 1148). By performing Vietnamese culture in an Australian university, the festival contests stereotyping and other issues of erasure while simultaneously asserting "what it means to be Australian."

While musical events such as the Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia do highlight the contributions of Vietnamese artists, larger discussions of music and multiculturalism must recognize that Vietnamese Australians continue to confront institutionalized racism within Australian society. Vietnamese Australians face higher rates of under- and unemployment compared to other segments of the population as well as higher rates of incarceration (Ben-Moshe and Pyke 2012: 20).

Reflecting on Vietnamese music in Australia, ethnomusicologist, composer, and musician Lê Tuấn Hùng notes that musical activities generally fall into two broad categories, which he labels "the preservation and cultivation of pre-existing music" and "the development of new music." (Lê 2011) In this categorization, music festivals—such as the Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia—tend to focus on the preservation of "pre-existing music," including Vietnamese traditional genres such as nhạc tài tử and cải lương. While the festival also featured melodies from other cultures, musicians performed these pieces on Vietnamese instruments, the đàn bầu and đàn tranh, locating the performance visually and aurally as Vietnamese.

As a composer, Lê Tuấn Hùng's work falls into the second category, "the development of new music." After studying traditional music in Vietnam, Lê Tuấn Hùng earned a Bachelor of Music in history and performance from the University of Melbourne in 1985 and a PhD in ethnomusicology from Monash University in Melbourne, completed in 1991. With a background in both Vietnamese and western musical education, Lê Tuấn Hùng composes experimenting with a variety of instruments, found objects, and electronic media. For example, *A Song For Sky Bells* (2004) is for đàn tranh, Balinese *suling*, unspecified Oceanian panpipes, and "power pole bells" (galvanized iron caps originally used by the State Electricity Company of Victoria to cover poles). Of his inspiration to use the power pole bells, Lê Tuấn Hưng wrote that he "had the impression that their richness of frequencies and harmonics was the result of years of absorbing waves of vibrations from the winds and electric cables under the Australian sky" ("A Song for Sky Bells" 2004). "A Song For Sky Bells" draws upon this idea of absorbed vibrations, sounded in the piece by the blending resonances of the bells, woodwinds, and đàn tranh.

Lê Tuấn Hùng's "A Song for Skybells" illustrates how musicians use Vietnamese instruments to express their heritage while also exploring Australian soundscapes. A frequent collaborator and spouse of Lê Tuấn Hưng, Đặng Kim Hiền is also a Vietnamese-Australian composer based in Melbourne. A multi-instrumentalist, she performs both Vietnamese traditional music and experimental works for Vietnamese and western instruments. Two of Đặng Kim Hiền's works for đàn bầu, "On a Quivering String" and "Melodia Nostalgia." Đặng Kim Hiền uses the

đàn bầu to reflect on her intersecting identities as a Vietnamese-Australian, as a working mother, and as a musician.

New Music for Đàn Bầu: Đặng Kim Hiền

Đặng Kim Hiền's retrospective 2013 album, *Melodia Nostalgica,* includes compositions written between 1982-2012 that feature "the results of the weaving of colourful threads of Vietnamese musical elements and new sonic materials that the composer has encountered on her creative path" (Đặng Kim Hiền 2013). This "weaving" of Vietnamese and new elements includes the incorporation of electronic effects with diverse instrumentation. *Melodia Nostalgica* features Vietnamese instruments—the đàn tràng, đàn bầu, đàn nguyệt (a two-string Vietnamese lute), and various percussion— alongside the Balinese suling flute, the Japanese *shakuhachi* end-blown flute, ocarina, *viola da gamba*, and renaissance tenor recorder.

While *Melodia Nostalgica* features instruments from a variety of cultures, sonically and visually the album highlights the composer's Vietnamese heritage. The cover of Melodia Nostalgica culturally locates the work as Vietnamese, featuring a photograph of Đặng Kim Hiền holding a đàn nguyệt, dressed in a pink áo dài (see figure 6.3). Vietnamese instrumentation as well as the incorporation of Vietnamese musical idioms into Đặng Kim Hiền's original compositions sonically identifies Vietnamese influences.

Figure 6.3: The album cover of Melodia Nostalgica (2013) by Đặng Kim Hiền.

On *Melodia Nostalgica,* however, Đặng Kim Hiền uses an adapted đàn bầu built by instrument maker Mr. Phan Chí Thanh in Vietnam. This đàn bầu is different in several ways: first, the instrument is longer than the đàn bầu, allowing for a longer string and thus an extended range. Secondly, this đàn bầu allows the player has greater speed and flexibility in bending the stick to control pitch. On a standard đàn bầu, the stick sits inside a small opening in the body of the instrument. In this adapted đàn bầu, the stick is attached to a hinge which is then connected to a spring, allowing for greater flexibility (Đặng Kim Hiền 2017). Lastly, the đàn bầu built by Mr. Phan Chí Thanh has a built-in electronic delay, acting as a kind of sustain pedal for đàn bầu after Đặng Kim Hiền plucks the string.

While the album title, *Melodia Nostalgica,* is a reference to "looking back" at Đặng Kim Hiền's work over the span of three decades, the title also refers to the composer's reflections of Vietnam. The Australia Asia Foundation commissioned the album's title track, "Melodia Nostalgica" (2013), as part of a larger project to feature perceptions of Asia by female electro-acoustic composers. In response to this call,

Đặng Kim Hiền wrote the piece as a reflection of her position as a Vietnamese Australian. Đặng Kim Hiền comments that although Australia is now her home, sounds of nature—such as the chirping of birds— "trigger flashes of memories," transporting her back to Vietnam (ibid). Đặng Kim Hiền wrote "Melodia Nostalgica" for đàn bầu and piano along with pre-recorded "chirping sounds of a flock of birds" and the sound of raindrops. She recorded the piece with the adapted đàn bầu built by Mr. Phan Chí Thanh. Slow and unmetered, the piece begins with a rolled chord and a soft trill on the piano. The đàn bầu immediately enters in the lowest range of the instrument. The larger body of the instrument extends the range of the đàn bầu. It also changes the timbre of the instrument, strikingly creating a sound closer to the undulations of the Theremin. Throughout the piece, piano trills imitate the recorded bird song, punctuated by reverberated passages of đàn bầu glissandi and the sounds of raindrops. The last two minutes of "Melodia Nostalgica" feature the electronic delay effects incorporated into Mr. Thanh's đàn bầu, resulting in an echoing, buzzing sound as the piano and birds fall silent for several seconds. The piece ends with solo đàn bầu, as one final note slowly decays to silence.

Also on *Melodia Nostalgica,* Đặng Kim Hiền's "On a Quivering String" (2005) explores the expressive capabilities of an adapted đàn bầu built by Mr. Thanh. Đặng Kim Hiền notes that she wrote "On a Quivering String" as a reflection of her feelings as a working mother. "My days have been full of contradicting feelings of joy and frustration, of exuberance and tension," she wrote of the piece. "These feelings are reflected in the different sonic elements generated from the single string of the đàn bầu…"(2013.) Expressing these contradicting feelings, "On a Quivering String"

contrasts passages of rhythmic density with moments of silence, juxtaposing the clarity of a single pitch with a flurry of electronically delayed sounds. Throughout, Đặng Kim Hiền experiments with various techniques for playing the monochord, including tapping the string and striking the stick with an open palm.

"On a Quivering String" showcases the timbral extremes of the extended đàn bầu, alternating between fast melodies in the high registers of the instrument to undulating, unmetered percussive passages in the lowest ranges of the đàn bầu. The piece begins in the lowest register of the monochord, with reverberated glissandi around one central pitch. The same melodic pattern is then repeated in a higher register, punctuated by periods of silence. Following this introduction, a slow melody in duple meter begins approximately 1:40 into the piece. Rapid, reverberated trills in the lowest register of the instrument suddenly interrupt a repeated variation upon this melody, as Đặng Kim Hiền strikes the string with her palm and then a stick. The remainder of "On a Quivering String" processes the sounds of the instrument through electronic effects (ibid.).

As these examples demonstrate, the đàn bầu provides a sonic expression of "what it means to be Australian" as a Vietnamese musician in the diaspora. During the Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia, musicians showcased Hue court music as a demonstration of a rich Vietnamese cultural heritage alive and well in the Australian context. The work of composer Đặng Kim Hiền explores the technical and timbral possibilities of an adapted đàn bầu, combining tradition with experimental and extended techniques to express her identities as a mother, a working musician, and as a Vietnamese Australian. In the following section, I will discuss how

Vietnamese musicians in Canada navigate similarly complex cultural and national identities in diasporic musical life.

Canada

Community Celebrations and National Symbols

On January 14, 2017, the Vietnamese Association of Toronto held its tenth annual Tết festival at the International Centre in Mississauga, Ontario. A celebration of the lunar New Year, Tết is a major holiday in Vietnamese culture marked by visits to family and friends, sharing special foods such as sticky rice rolls (*bánh chưng* or *bánh tét*), and raucous fireworks displays, along with other festivities. One of the largest Tết celebrations in Canada, the 2017 festival ceremonies focused on representing the variety of Vietnamese organizations across the country, celebrating the contributions of these communities to Canada's multicultural society.[32] The ceremony began with a parade of representatives from each organization into the hall, each group carrying Canadian and South Vietnamese flags. Following the parade, two choirs performed the national anthems of Canada and of South Vietnam. The first, a group of women and young girls in yellow áo dài dresses sang the national anthem "O Canada," accompanied by a recorded backing track and led by a male conductor (figure 6.4). After "O Canada," a second choir (mainly comprised of older adults) sang the anthem of South Vietnam, "Tiếng Gọi

[32] Canada currently has a Vietnamese population of approximately 150,000 Vietnamese-Canadians. This population continues to grow according to a government report compiled with 2001 data, between 1996-2001 the number of Canadians reporting Vietnamese heritage rose 11% while the overall Canadian population grew by 4% (Lindsay 2007: 9). Following an influx of Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s and 1980s, Vietnamese communities in Canada continue to grow faster than the overall national population.

Công Dân" or "Call to Citizens" (figure 6.5). As seen in figure 6.6, a Canadian flag and the flag of South Vietnam stood prominently on stage, while choir members wear yellow scarves with red stripes, the colors and pattern of the South Vietnamese flag. Accompanied by a pre-recorded band, the choir sang the march as audience members nodded their heads to the duple meter (Vietnamese Broadcasting Services Canada 2017).

"O Canada!"

O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

Figure 6.4: First verse of the Canadian national anthem "O Canada!" (English version).
Text from Citizenship and Immigration Canada,
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/celebrate/pdf/National_Anthem_e.pdf

“Tiếng Gọi Công Dân”	“Call to Citizens”
Này Công Dân ơi! Đứng lên đáp lời sông núi. Đồng lòng cùng đi hy sinh tiếc gì thân sống. Vì tương lai Quốc Dân, cùng xông pha khói tên, Làm sao cho núi sông từ nay luôn vững bền. Dù cho thây phơi trên gươm giáo, Thù nước, lấy máu đào đem báo. Nòi giống lúc biến phải cần giải nguy, Người Công Dân luôn vững bền tâm trí. Hùng tráng quyết chiến đấu làm cho khắp nơi Vang tiếng người nước Nam cho đến muôn đời! Công Dân ơi! Mau hiến thân dưới cờ! Công Dân ơi! Mau làm cho cõi bờ Thoát cơn tàn phá, vẻ vang nòi giống Xứng danh nghìn năm giòng giống Lạc Hồng!	Oh citizens! And at our Country’s call Of one heart we go forth, sacrificing ourselves with no regrets. For the future of the people, advance into battle, Let us make this land eternally strong. Should our bodies be left on the battlefields, The nation will be avenged with our crimson blood. The Race in times of crisis will be rescued, We the People remain resolute in our hearts and minds Courageously we will fight such that everywhere The Glory of the Vietnamese resounds for eternity Oh citizens! Hasten to offer yourselves under the flag! Oh citizens! Hasten to defend this land Escape from destruction, and bask our Race in glory Be forever worthy of the Lạc Hồng descendants!

Figure 6.5: “Tiếng Gọi Công Dân,” the anthem of South Vietnam, first verse. Anthem text and English translation from the Union of North American Vietnamese Student Associations (UNAVSA) knowledgebase: http://knowledge.unavsa.org/culture/vietnamese-heritage-flag-and-the-national-anthem-of-south-vietnam/

Figure 6.6: A choir sings "Tiếng Gọi Công Dân," the anthem of South Vietnam, at the Toronto 2017 Tết celebration on Saturday, January 14, 2017 at the International Centre in Mississauga, Ontario.
Image capture from a video posted on YouTube by the Vietnamese Canadian Broadcasting Association, January 19, 2017.

At the Tết celebration, the gathered community celebrated both Canadian citizenship and Vietnamese heritage symbolically through carrying flags and singing anthems. Music, including the singing of national anthems, is an important expression of the political viewpoints of Vietnamese Canadian organizations during large gatherings and festivals. In anti-communist Vietnamese diaspora communities, the flying of the flag of South Vietnam—rather than the yellow-star flag of the Socialist Republic—is a particularly charged issue (see figure 6.7). In 2016, the VCA authored a letter to the mayor and city council of Surrey, opposing the display of the Vietnamese flag at the Surrey Fusion Festival. "To honor millions of victims of the Vietnamese Communist regime and to preserve and human dignity of all Canadians," the letter closed, "we implore your Council to do the right thing by forbidding the display of a symbol that represents hatred, terror, [and] oppression and replace it with a symbol that calls for love, peace and democracy." (Vietnamese

Canadian Federation 2016) Forty years after the Fall of Saigon, the relationship between diaspora communities and Vietnam is a emotionally and politically frought with associations of violence and pain. For the VCA, the symbol of "love, peace and democracy" refers to the flag of South Vietnam, which the letter highlights as the "Vietnamese Freedom and Heritage Flag." (ibid) In the diaspora, anthems and flags are nationalist symbols and a strong anti-communist statement.

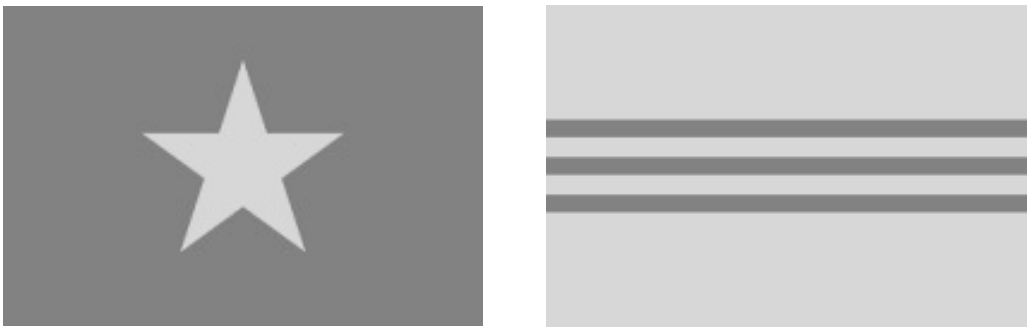

Figure 6.7: The flags of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Flag of South Vietnam.
The flag of the Socialist Republic (left) has a red background and yellow star. The Flag of South Vietnam (also known as the Freedom and Heritage Flag, right) has a yellow background with three red stripes.

Along with flags and anthems of Canada, state officials were also on hand to visibly acknowledge the role of the Vietnamese community in Canadian society. Several members of parliament and Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the lieutenant governor of Ontario, gave a series of welcoming speeches referenced the strength of the Vietnamese community and affirmed the commitment of the Canadian government at local and national levels to support Vietnamese culture (ibid). Along with these symbolic affirmations of Vietnamese culture by the Canadian government, the state financially and politically supports music making in Vietnamese diaspora communities under the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act, administered by

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). The Multiculturalism Act facilitates state funding for multicultural education in schools, including educational presentations of Vietnamese music.[33] One example of Vietnamese music programs in Canadian schools are those of "Khac Chi Bamboo Music," a duo of Vietnamese Canadian musicians Hồ Khắc Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích who tour Canada introducing young people to instruments and musical traditions of Vietnam.

Vietnamese Music in Canadian Schools: Khac Chi Bamboo Music

As seen in the Khac Chi Bamboo publicity photo below (see figure eight), Hoàng Ngọc Bích is holding a đàn bầu with a body made of bamboo rather than typical hard wood. Behind Ms. Bích is a t'rưng xylophone; to her left is a set of *k'lông pút* bamboo tubes. Mr. Chí is holding an instrument of his own invention: the đàn quạt, a set of bamboo flutes played by squeezing plastic bulb ends against the player's body.

[33] Education is not federally regulated in Canada; policies are implemented at the provincial level. For this reason, multicultural education varies widely in each Canadian province.

Figure 6.8: A publicity photo for Khac Chi Bamboo Music.
The duo features Hoàng Ngọc Bích (seated) and Hồ Khắc Chí (Khac Chi Bamboo Music, N.d. “Photos for Press.”)

The đàn bầu is a key component of Khac Chi Bamboo Music’s educational programs. One of the ensemble’s promotional YouTube videos features excerpts from a 2012 performance at an elementary school. During the presentation, Hồ Khắc Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích use audience participation and humor to engage students. In one of these excerpts, Mr. Chí plays the đàn bầu, while students giggle at his exaggerated facial expressions and gestures for dramatic effect. Meanwhile, Ms. Bích encourages students to clap along with the performance. In the next excerpt, Ms. Bích introduces students to the k'lông pút, an instrument of the Bahnar minority group in Central Vietnam comprised of several bamboo tubes. Musicians play the k'lông pút by pushing air through the tubes through clapping his or her hands in front of the tubes. In classroom performances, Ms. Bích teaches students how to replicate this sound by clapping their hands in front of their mouths, leading them through a rendition of “Frere Jacques.” (Khac Chi Bamboo Music 2012). As seen in the above press photo, Hồ Khắc Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích showcase the đàn bầu in

their educational performances, specifically a đàn bầu with a bamboo body rather than the typical hard wood box. As the đàn bầu is electric, the bamboo body does not significantly impact the sound of the instrument. Aesthetically, a bamboo body connects the đàn bầu with the other instruments in the Khac Chi Bamboo Music programs such as the k'lông pút bamboo tubes.

In the late 1990s, became involved with ArtStarts in Schools, a Vancouver-based non-profit organization that facilitates educational demonstrations and performances in Canadian schools.[34] Working with ArtStarts, Hồ Khắc Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích first created the Khac Chi Bamboo Music program to present a Vietnamese cultural program for Vancouver schools. While developing their first presentation, Ms. Bích and Mr. Chí noted that several programs featuring Chinese musical instruments would look similar to a demonstration of Vietnamese instruments. "In [Vietnamese] conservatories, they teach so many instruments that are originally from China, and Chinese culture in Canada is quite strong because the Chinese have migrated to Canada for over a hundred years," Ms. Bích explained. "Mr. Chí and I thought that we would like to have our work be more unique. So we focused on the instruments that are mostly found only in Vietnam, like the đàn bầu, *kni* [chordophone of highland minority groups], and the k'lông pút. Those instruments are all made of bamboo, so we focused more on bamboo!" (Hoàng Ngọc Bích 2017b). Bamboo became the thematic focus of Ms. Bích and Mr. Chí's music program, differentiating the duo from Chinese musical groups. For Khac Chi Bamboo

[34] Established in 1996, ArtStarts in Schools is an advocate for arts education, funding artist residencies, organzing teacher workshops, and providing educational materials for classroom use. For more about the organization, see http://artstarts.com/about.

Music, the đàn bầu became a visual symbol with which the group could market its program to schools. In addition to the monochord, the kni, k'lông pút, and đàn t'rưng bamboo zither (pictured in figure 6.8), also differentiate the ensemble from Chinese musical groups. These three instruments are all from Vietnamese minority groups, incorporated into Việt majority culture through state institutions.

The Khac Chi Bamboo Music program was one of Ms. Bích and Mr. Chí's first musical projects in Canada. In 1992, the couple first visited Canada while on a concert tour. Instead of returning to Vietnam at the end of the tour, they decided to stay in Vancouver for personal reasons. During their first few years in Canada, Ms. Bích and Mr. Chí worked in the service industry as they struggled to adjust to their new home."It was a very difficult time. We could not speak English, and we started all over again" (ibid.). In 1996, they were able to resume their careers as performing musicians, including their work with ArtStart in Schools. Over the following decade, Ms. Bích and Mr. Chí continued to develop their Khac Chi Bamboo Music program, performing across Canada and the United States.

Along with their educational projects, Hồ Khắc Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích are both accomplished performers. Hồ Khắc Chí attended the National School of Music in Hanoi where, as part of his training, the Vietnamese Department of Culture sent Mr. Chí abroad to study conducting and traditional music pedagogy in Tashkent,

Uzbekistan from 1977-1982.[35] Returning to Hanoi, Mr. Chí taught đàn bầu in the newly formed Department of Traditional Music at the re-named Vietnam National Academy of Music (Khac Chi Bamboo Music, "Artists"). His wife, Hoàng Ngọc Bích, remembers that Mr. Chí had a large number of students, many of whom went on to teach in music schools throughout Vietnam. Along with other academy faculty, Mr. Chí wrote the first đàn bầu pedagogy books, standardizing đàn bầu repertoire and techniques.[36] Along with maintaining an active teaching studio, Mr. Chí was also a well-known performer, often performing on the national television station. "There was only one TV [channel at that time]," Ms. Bích remembers, "so when they broadcast his show, the whole country knew him!" (Hoàng Ngọc Bích 2017a). Ms. Bích also maintained an active teaching and performing career in Vietnam. She began to study the đàn bầu at age eight at a local music school in Hanoi, continuing her studies at what is now the Hanoi National Academy of Music and completing a bachelor's degree in 1987. After graduation, she taught at the Hanoi College of Arts, actively performed, and arranged music for national radio and television stations (ibid.)

Through their educational efforts Hoàng Ngọc Bích and Hồ Khắc Chí increased the prestige đàn bầu in Vietnam. Performing the đàn bầu on television, Hồ

[35] Recordings of Mr. Chí performing đàn bầu with the folk orchestra of Tashkent University and the Uzbek State Folk Orchestra at this time are featured on Hồ ả ắc Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích's album *Sounds of the Dan Bau* (2006). During a 2017 interview, Hoàng Ngọc Bích reflected that the Uzbek ensembles were surprised by the ability of the đàn bầu to articulate microtonal ornamentations. "They said, 'how can this Vietnamese instrument play our music so beautifully!'" she recalled. "So after the performance, they wanted to make a recording [with đàn bầu], and they broadcast it on television on the New Year." (Hoàng Ngọc Bích 2017a).

[36] Over thirty years later, many of these manuals are still in use in Vietnam. My đàn bầu teacher in Hanoi, Mr. Thành, used one of Mr. Chí's books during our lessons in June 2015.

Khắc Chí brought the instrument into private homes, increasing awareness of the monochord in the public consciousness. As educators, both Mr. Chí and Ms. Bích also encouraged a new generation of musicians to study the đàn bầu. As discussed in chapter four, throughout the late 1970s and 1980s Vietnamese state institutions (such as the National Academy of Music) promoted Vietnamese traditional instruments as patriotic symbols of the nation. In particular, the đàn bầu was able to represent a national culture as a uniquely Vietnamese instrument (without antecedents in the Chinese instrumentarium). To further encourage interest in the đàn bầu, the Vietnamese state sponsored contests to encourage innovative new performance techniques for the monochord.

In 1988, Mr. Chí received an award in a government-sponsored contest to "improve" upon traditional instruments. By adding a set of five raised frets to the instrument, Mr. Chí highlighted five additional harmonics, adding new timbral possibilities (see figure nine). Standard đàn bầu technique is to produce harmonics at six nodes along the string roughly between the stick and the middle of the instrument (to the player's left). On the other half of the string, these same six harmonics are also possible, between the middle of the string and the other end of the instrument (to the player's right), but musicians find that the sound is less bright and clear. Adding raised frets to the end of the đàn bầu corresponding with five of these additional harmonics. From the center of the instrument moving right, the frets correspond to scale degrees 1, 5, 3, 5, and 1. Mr. Chí was able to bring out these harmonics by tapping the frets. A photo of Ms. Bích playing a fretted đàn bầu below in figure ten pictures this tapping technique

Figure 6.9: A đàn bầu with five frets, by Hồ Khắc Chí.

Figure 6.10: Hoàng Ngọc Bích strikes the frets on her đàn bầu during a performance of "Girl of the Forest," November 12, 2016.
Screen capture from VICO's YouTube channel, accessed April 20, 2017.

Both Mr. Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích continued to perform and teach using the đàn bầu with frets after they moved to Canada in 1992, but the popularity of the adapted instrument quickly declined in Vietnam after their departure. Ms. Bích observed that it was difficult for đàn bầu instructors balance teaching and other professional obligations with learning the new fretted đàn bầu techniques. "I would like to promote [the fretted đàn bầu]," she explained. "I hope through seeing my playing, I can excite other people to use it" (ibid). Through concertizing with the fretted đàn bầu in Canada and abroad, Ms. Bích works to promote awareness of the instrument's expressive capabilities.

Along with her performances, as a composer Hoàng Ngọc Bích has written several pieces for the fretted đàn bầu. One of her most recent works for the instrument is *River of Memories* (2016), written for the Vancouver Inter-Cultural

Orchestra (VICO).[37] On November 12, 2016, VICO sponsored a concert titled "Bamboo: Vietnamese and Intercultural Fusions" at the Orpheum Annex in Vancouver, British Columbia. The performance featured guest artists Hoàng Ngọc Bích on đàn bầu and Vietnamese American musician Vanessa Vân-Ánh Vo on the đàn tranh zither and đàn t'rung bamboo xylophone. Hoàng Ngọc Bích wrote *River of Memories* for solo đàn bầu and twelve members of the VICO ensemble, performing violin, viola, cello, bass, flute, and percussion as well as the *erhu* spike fiddle, *yangqin* dulcimer, *yueqin* lute, and the *oud* lute (as shown in figure 6.11). The instrumentation of the VICO ensemble consistently changes, depending on the personnel the artistic director, Mark Armanini, hires for the season. Hoàng Ngọc Bích told me that she did not choose the instrumentation for *River of Memories*, but rather that "the artistic director [Mark Armanini] gave me the list of instruments…so then I wrote for them." (Hoàng Ngọc Bích 2017a) The piece premiered with the "Bamboo: Vietnamese and Intercultural Fusions concert, conducted by Peggy Hua (Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra 2017).

[37] Founded in 2000, the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra's mission is to "act as a forum for the creation of a new musical art form, one in which all of Canada's resident cultures can take part." (VICO, "About.) Composer Mark Armani is the current artistic director. The size and instrumentation of VICO continually changes, depending on concert themes and available personnel. The 2016-2017 season, for example, focused on new compositions for Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Iranian, and Indian instruments. For more information, see VICO's website at www.vi-co.org.

Figure 6.11: Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra's performance of River of Memories (2016) by Hoàng Ngọc Bích, featuring the composer as đàn bầu soloist. November 12, 2016. Screen capture from VICO's YouTube channel, accessed April 20, 2017.

Hoàng Ngọc Bích explains that with *River of Memories,* she intended to write a piece that highlighted extended techniques to demonstrate the expressive capabilities of the đàn bầu. For inspiration, she drew on a series of images in her mind surrounding water. "For each part [of *River of Memories*], I had a picture in my mind [and] I followed that image," she said of the piece (Hoàng Ngọc Bích 2017a). She explains that these images ranged from broad feelings (like the sensation of a calm morning) to specific personal memories from her own childhood, playing in a river with friends. Hoàng Ngọc Bích was also moved by images she saw on television and the Internet of flooding in Central Vietnam, caused by Typhoon Sarkira in October 2016. She was particularly effected by destruction in Quang Binh province,

where pre-emptive emergency discharges of dam water at hydroelectric power plants destroyed local homes.[38]

"River of Memory" begins with a slow introduction in duple meter, representing Ms. Bích's vision of a calm morning. Đàn bầu glissandi in the highest registers of the instrument are accompanied only by yangqin tremolo. The second half of this introduction begins to showcase extended đàn bầu techniques: while the flute repeats the melody introduced by the đàn bầu, Hoàng Ngọc Bích taps the frets of the đàn bầu, creating a series of percussive harmonics. After this calm introduction, the two sections of the piece are a lively reflection on childhood play, with woodblock and the yangqin emphasizing a faster duple meter. The đàn bầu again trades melodies with the flute and violin, alternating between standard and extended techniques (Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra 2017). "River of Memories" builds in tempo and rhythmic density in the second section. The ensemble articulates the end of each phrase with a loud shout ("whoo-ha!").

The buoyancy of this third section is sharply contrasted in the following, fourth section. Here, Ms. Bích reflects upon the destructive properties of water, remembering a typhoon that struck central Vietnam in late 2016 (Hoàng Ngọc Bích 2017a). In this third section, "River of Memories" switches to a minor key as Hoàng Ngọc Bích, accompanied only by a low ostinato in the bowed strings, sings a slow series of vocables before playing the đàn bầu with a viola bow (pictured in figure 6.12). Ms. Bích is one of the first đàn bầu musicians to experiment with bowing the

[38] For more about this typhoon, see the BBC News article "Flooding Hits Central Vietnam Ahead of Typhoon Sakira," (17 October 2016, accessed 14 May 2017), http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37672862.

instrument. After experimenting with violin and cello bows, she found that viola bows are the right size and weight for her playing style.

Figure 6.12: Hoàng Ngọc Bích bows the fretted đàn bầu during a Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra performance on October 12, 2016.
Screen capture from VICO's YouTube channel, accessed April 20, 2017.

In *River of Memories*, Ms. Bích bows the đàn bầu to produce a more strident timbre than the instrument's characteristically resonant sound. When I asked Ms. Bích why she bows the instrument in *River of Memories,* she explained that in the passages depicting the devastation of a typhoon, she uses the bow to express "deep, deep sadness." (ibid.) Bowing the đàn bầu is another way Ms. Bích expands the sonic palate of the instrument. "With a one string zither," she observed, "we can make so many different kinds of sound." (ibid) By showcasing the timbral Ms. Bích continues to leverage her professional visibility to raise the level of artistic prestige for the đàn bầu.

Following this slow section representing the destruction of the typhoon, Ms. Bích then wanted to express a personalized image of a mother looking through the rubble of her home. Reflecting on this pain, *River of Memories* descends into a

sustained dissonant tremolo, featuring solo, bowed đàn bầu as a representation of personal loss. Overall, however, the piece ends with hope for the future, returning to happy childhood memories. After a brief pause, a reprise of the third section at a faster tempo brings the piece to a dramatic close (Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra 2017).

In the Canadian Vietnamese diaspora, music making is intimately connected to performances of political and cultural identity. During the Vietnamese Association of Toronto's 2017 Tết festival, the singing of Canadian and South Vietnamese national anthems, alongside the parading of both state's flags, celebrated Vietnamese culture while sonically and visually separating the VAT community from the current Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Immigrating to Canada in the 1990s, Hồ Khắc Chí and Hoàng Ngọc Bích provide educational performances sharing Vietnamese culture with school children without direct references to national symbols. As a performing artist and composer, Hoàng Ngọc Bích draws upon the đàn bầu to express memories of Vietnam while simultaneously celebrating the cultural diversity of Vancouver.

Conclusion

Music offers a unique insight into the personal, political, and social stakes of creating and participating in diasporic culture. During the 2016 Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia, performers and audiences at the University of Adelaide were invested in celebrating the contributions of a specific vision of Vietnamese culture to a multicultural Australia. The political climate in the Vietnamese Australian diaspora,

primarily comprised of political refugees and their extended families, encourages the promotion of a Vietnamese culture rooted in the past, specifically before 1975. In Australia, this connection to a pre-communist past is implicit rather than explicit—drawn by a specific repertoire (e.g., Hue court music) and the marketing of the event as a celebration of the diaspora community. Meanwhile, during the Vietnamese Association of Toronto's 2017 Tết festival, the singing of Canadian and South Vietnamese national anthems was a more explicit separation of the Canadian Vietnamese diaspora from the state of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The đàn bầu expresses their reflections about Vietnam and the diaspora, composers and performers Đặng Kim Hiền and Hoàng Ngọc Bích are invested in extended đàn bầu techniques and adaptive technologies for the instrument. Đặng Kim Hiền composes for a đàn bầu with an extended range and electronic effects, using the đàn bầu to express her identities as a mother, a working musician, and as a Vietnamese Australian. Đặng Kim Hiền's work connects to other narratives in the Vietnamese diaspora in which artists contributing more nuanced accounts of their experiences. In *This is All I Choose to Tell,* literary scholar Isabelle Pelaud explores how writers in the Vietnamese diaspora use memoirs, essays, and non-fiction to push back against dominant narratives that erase or trivialize their experiences. In her work on *hát bội* musical theater in the Southern California diaspora, ethnomusicologist Kim Nguyen Tran has noted how diaspora performances express nostalgia, loss, and the difficulties of acclimating to a new country in which they find their experiences undervalued or underrepresented (2017: iii). With a grant from the Australia Asia Foundation for electro-acoustic impressions of Asia by Australian

female composers, Đặng Kim Hiền composed "Melodia Nostalgica" as a personal reflection of the Vietnamese soundscape. "For me Asia is not an exotic place," she wrote of the piece. "Asia was the homeland of my past….[m]y memories of the old land are the foundation for my efforts of planting the seeds for future flowers in Australia, my homeland of the present." (2013) For Đặng Kim Hiền, the đàn bầu provides a way to sonically ground her memories of Vietnam, representing specific and personal memories.

For Hoàng Ngọc Bích, performance on the fretted đàn bầu is an aesthetic as well as a political choice. In composing *River of Memories,* she uses the đàn bầu to express her own memories of Vietnam while simultaneously celebrating the cultural diversity of Vancouver through performances with VICO. Proud of the đàn bầu as a national instrument of Vietnam in general and of the expressive capabilities of the fretted đàn bầu in particular, Ms. Bích works to encourage musicians' interest in the instrument through actively concertizing with the instrument.

In the following chapter, I turn to the United States, focusing on music in the San Francisco Bay Area Vietnamese diaspora. Đàn bầu performance maintains cultural focus as musicians and audiences interact with it as as a symbol of Vietnamese heritage. While musicians call upon the đàn bầu to represent the past—e.g., images of a country left behind and memories of the departure—they also draw upon the instrument as expressive medium to articulate the experiences, desires, and possibilities of life in the diaspora.

Chapter Seven. "The Vivid Life of the Left Hand": Đàn bầu Performance in the San Francisco Bay Area

Describing her recent album, *Three Mountain Pass,* multi-instrumentalist Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ explains that the collection is a tribute to "the vivid life of the left hand," a reference to the hand controlling pitch and ornamentation on her đàn bầu and đàn tranh zithers. "It [the left hand] brings out all the colors, everything you want to hear, the bending and sliding notes." Ms. Vân-Ánh explains (Innova Recordings 2013). The cover of *Three Mountain Pass* (pictured in figure one) features Ms. Vân-Ánh and two đàn tranh zithers. In this reference to the left hand's capability to ornament melodies produced by the zither player's right hand, Ms. Vân-Ánh highlights an essential component of đàn bầu performance. More broadly, "the vivid life of the left hand" also refers to the way that Ms. Vân-Ánh conceptualizes đàn bầu performance in the diaspora as a vibrant practice. By composing her own music for the đàn bầu, Ms. Vân-Ánh has found that she can reach a wider audience and express her experiences as a Vietnamese-American.

Figure 7.1: The cover of *Three Mountain Pass* by Vân Ánh Vanessa Võ, issued by Innova Records.

This chapter focuses on đàn bầu performance in the San Francisco Bay Area, exploring how musicians such as Ms. Vân-Ánh and members of the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center's Sử Việt Zithers ensemble use the instrument to articulate personal and political priorities surrounding identity, community, and artistic expression in the Vietnamese diaspora. Concentrating on the metropolitan areas of San Francisco and San Jose, this chapter addresses a lacuna in music scholarship concerning California's Vietnamese communities. Previous scholarship has addressed Vietnamese musical life in Southern California's Orange County, home to the United States' first "Little Saigon" community.[39] Building on previous research on the Vietnamese American diaspora (P. Nguyễn 1995, 2001; Reyes 1999; Võ 2003; Espiritu 2006; Pelaud 2010) this chapter works towards a more

[39] Ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong has examined the career of Phạm Duy, a celebrated musician in the Orange County diaspora, contextualizing the history of Vietnamese music production in Southern California (2004).

comprehensive understanding of music in San Francisco Bay Area Vietnamese communities through three studies: Ms. Vân-Ánh's *the Odyssey* (2016) and two performances organized by the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center.

Ms. Vân-Ánh's *The Odyssey: From Vietnam to America* is a musical reflection on the journey of the "boat people," Vietnamese refugees who fled the country by sea. The đàn bầu plays an important sonic role in *The Odyssey,* from imitating the sound of a diesel boat engine to representing the sound of a lamenting human voice. Ms. Vân-Ánh moved to the United States in 2001 and did not personally experience the specific traumas of post-war refugees. Growing up in Hanoi after the end of the war, however, she has first-hand knowledge of the devastation, poverty, and hardship wrought by the conflict. In California, Ms. Vân-Ánh was inspired to musically reflect on the experiences of Vietnamese refugees after hearing the stories of new friends in the Bay Area diaspora. With this personal knowledge and yet a certain distance from the experience, Ms. Vân-Ánh is perhaps uniquely poised to explore the experiences of Vietnamese-American refugees musically. *The Odyssey* illustrates the power of music to represent and to heal trauma within the Vietnamese diaspora, yet the piece is also a step towards reconciliation within the diaspora community. As a performing artist from northern Vietnam, Ms. Vân-Ánh remembers encountering suspicion and distrust from members of the Vietnamese community from southern Vietnam. With *The Odyssey,* she hopes: "to deliver the message of peace, of healing, and of forgiveness" through music. (Võ 2016) A composition by a northern Vietnamese composer commemorating the experiences

of Vietnamese refugees, *The Odyssey* is thus also represents a step towards healing divisions within the Vietnamese-American diaspora.

I examine two projects of the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center (*Trung Tâm Văn Hóa Âu Cơ*). Founded in in 1983 in San Francisco, the Âu Cơ Center organizes holiday celebrations, concerts, and festivals that draw audiences from around the Bay Area.[40] The main activity of the Âu Cơ Center is a Saturday Vietnamese language school for young heritage speakers, held at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in San Francisco. The Âu Cơ Center also organizes festivals, concerts, and community celebrations at the Tenderloin Recreation Center. Opened in 1995, the Tenderloin Recreation Center caters to the neighborhoods young population, sponsoring after-school programs, hosting soccer classes, and providing a safe and supervised playground area. The center also rents its space to San Francisco community organizations for special events. While events sponsored by the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center draw members of the Vietnamese community from across the Bay Area, the location of these events at the Tenderloin Recreation Center is a conscious acknowledgement of the community's historic connection to the neighborhood. As one of the city's more affordable neighborhoods, the Tenderloin attracted newly arrived Vietnamese post-war refugees in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, Vietnamese restaurants, grocery stores, and other Vietnamese-run small

[40] The Âu Cơ Vietnamese Center is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization. Although the center started as a language school, over the past thirty years the organization has expanded its youth leadership and cultural programs. See www.aucocenter.org. "Âu Cơ" is a the legendary mother of the Vietnam, a supernatural being who gave birth to the first one hundred ancestors of the Vietnamese people. (For more about the legend of Âu Cơ see K. Taylor 1983: 303).

businesses in the area characterize a two-block section of the Tenderloin known as "Little Saigon."[41]

In this discussion, I focus on two events held by the Âu Cơ Center in Little Saigon's Tenderloin Recreation Center: a Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival and a commemoration event marking the 42nd anniversary of the Fall of Saigon. Co-organizing the Mid-Autumn Festival with the Southeast Asian Arts and Culture Coalition (SEACC), the Âu Cơ Center emphasized Southeast Asian American identity as a marker of solidarity during the festival. Organizers placed special emphasis on the cultural diversity and importance of the Tenderloin neighborhood, stressing the need for community solidarity. A performance by Âu Cơ's resident musical ensemble, the Sử Việt

Zithers, demonstrates how musical and visual markers perform Vietnamese identity. I also consider my own role in the Mid-Autumn Festival, invited by the Âu Cơ Center to provide hands-on đàn bầu demonstrations for festival guests. My second case study is a commemoration event organized by the Âu Cơ Center to mark the 42nd anniversary of the Fall of Saigon. At the event, the Âu Cơ Center constructed an allegorical narrative connecting the struggles and accomplishments of Vietnamese refugees to pre-modern national legends, heroes, and heroines through musical and visual references.

Through their musical projects, Ms. Vân-Ánh and the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center present different visions of Vietnamese-American identity in the San

[41] In 2004, the city of San Francisco recognized a two-block area of the Tenderloin neighborhood as the city's "Little Saigon San Francisco's "Little Saigon" is a two-block area of Larkin Street, between Eddy and O'Farrell Streets (Estrella 2004).

Francisco Bay Area. As these three case studies demonstrate, Vietnamese-American musicians and their audiences articulate political priorities, personal experiences, and cultural values through đàn bầu performance. As a symbol of Vietnamese identity, the đàn bầu provides a sonic space in which to confront trauma, negotiate conflict, and build community.

The 2016 Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival

My involvement in the 6th annual Mid-Autumn Festival (organized by the Southeast Asian Arts and Culture Coalition) led me to question the stakes of a Southeast Asian cultural celebration in a multi-cultural neighborhood like the Tenderloin, especially questions of representation. Who is able to speak for a culture and what materials do they deem significant? This is perhaps the most obvious ethical conundrum. In her work on Chinese American participation in diaspora multicultural festivals, ethnomusicologist Su Zheng notes that music performances at these festivals hold the potential to empower participants while also operating as "sites where the master narrative and unsung counternarratives simultaneously enact cultural spectacles, demand attention, and claim successes" (2010: 198). At the Mid-Autumn Festival, each participating organization chose which songs, dances, and cuisine to use to represent their culture. In this way, the leadership of each organization controlled a "master narrative" that communicated a particular vision of a national culture.

At the same time, however, multicultural festivals also empower individual participants who are often displaced from dominant narratives in the diaspora. The

Samaki Project, for example, a Cambodian- promoted awareness of Cambodian history and culture at the festival. Approximately 148,000 Cambodian refugees arrived in the United States as refugees between 1975-1994, but variety of factors (including systemic inequalities and xenophobia) complicated Cambodian-American's integration into society, marginalizing their voices (Chan 2015). The Samaki Project's presentation at the festival raised awareness about Cambodian-American grass-roots organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center represented Vietnam at the Mid-Autumn Festival, as a performance by the center's Sử Việt Zithers began the festival's live entertainment. Meaning "Vietnamese History," the Sử Việt Zithers ensemble is comprised of students associated with the Âu Cơ Center. Most of the ensemble members are high school students, with the exception of two older community members. The size of the group changes somewhat regularly as students come and go, but the instrumentation of the group primarily consists of five to ten đàn tranh zithers and one đàn bầu player. Led by Ms. Vân-Ánh, the group rehearses every Saturday at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School alongside Âu Cơ's language program. On this particularly warm day in September, the Sử Việt Zithers set up their đàn tranh and đàn bầu onstage in the Tenderloin neighborhood Recreation Center courtyard (see figure 7.2).[42]

[42] The Sử Việt Zithers were the only Vietnamese musical group during the afternoon performances, but the San Francisco Wushu Martial Arts Team (comprised of a number of Âu Cơ students) also represented Vietnam on the stage (San Francisco Wushu: http://www.sfwushu.com/wushu). Wushu is a globally-popular Chinese martial art form. For more information see the International Wushu Federation website: http://www.iwuf.org/wushu/2014/0926/178.html.

Figure 7.2: Members of the Sử Việt Zithers ensemble perform at the Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival.
The Southeast Asian Arts and Culture Coalition organized the exhibition at the Tenderloin Community Center on September 17, 2016. Photo by the author.

The Sử Việt Zithers began an afternoon of multi-cultural entertainment with a medley of two folk songs: "Lý Quạ Kêu" (The Crow Caws) and "Lý Kéo Chài" ("Pulling Fishing Nets"), performed by four đàn tranh players and one đàn bầu. The group's instructor, Ms. Vân-Ánh, arranged these melodies for the Sử Việt Zithers to be performed with a pre-recorded background track of synthesized flute, keyboard, and drumset. As Ms. Vân-Ánh had a previous engagement that afternoon, the group's đàn bầu player acted as conductor, marking the duple meter with head and arm gestures for the other musicians.

By presenting "Lý Quạ Kêu" (The Crow Caws) and "Lý Kéo Chài" (Pulling the Fish Net), the Sử Việt Zithers represented Vietnamese culture among the other Southeast Asian performances. Throughout the performance, the Sử Việt Zithers

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The afternoon performance also featured musicians, dancers, and martial artists from the Cambodian School of San Francisco, the United Khmer Preservation Group of Fresno, the Khmer Youth of Modesto, the Thai Buddhapradeep Temple of San Francisco, One Myanmar Community, and the Mongolian Ger Youth Center.

used gestures to engage the audience members unfamiliar with Vietnamese. “Lý Qua Kêu,” the musicians alternated between playing the melody on their instruments and mimicking the flapping of bird wings, tapping their instruments on each downbeat; during “Lý Kéo Chài,” the ensemble gestured casting and pulling nets out of the water (Viet Vung Vinh 2016). Along with this musical representation of Vietnam, the Sử Việt Zithers also wore Vietnamese traditional dress. The đàn tranh players, all women, wore white áo dài with purple floral accents and matching purple hats. The Zither group’s only đàn bầu player, a young man named Christopher, wore a white áo dài with an embroidered tiger and a matching white hat.

Inside the Tenderloin Recreation Center gymnasium, festival attendees visited the booths of participating organizations to learn about art, music, and dance of the Philippines, Cambodia, Burma, Mongolia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center organized the largest display at the festival (as shown in figure 7.3), featuring posters about the traditional áo dài dress, photographs of past concerts of Vietnamese music hosted by the Âu Cơ Center, and a collection of Vietnamese water puppets, and a display of Vietnamese instruments, including a đàn bầu and a đàn tranh. The Âu Cơ center curated these objects to represent Vietnamese culture to festival attendees. Material traces of contemporary Vietnamese or Vietnamese-American arts and music were markedly absent from this display. Traditional Vietnamese arts held more cultural capital at the festival as symbols of an imagined Vietnamese past.

Figure 7.3: Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center volunteers staff the Vietnamese culture display at the Southeast Asian Art & Culture Exhibition on September 17, 2016.

From left to right, the display includes a đàn tranh zither and drum, a set of Vietnamese water puppets, and examples of Vietnamese pottery and painting. Photo by the author.

In addition to the display, Âu Cơ Center organizer Ms. Hang Le To (Vietnamese order Tô Lê Hằng) wanted to offer interactive demonstrations of musical instruments, to provide audience members with a more "hands-on" experience. As the center's Executive Director Ms. Hang is an energetic driving force behind the Âu Cơ Center. I met Ms. Hang often at the Âu Cơ Center, since her son Christopher is the only đàn bầu player in the Sử Việt Zithers group. When discussing possibilities for volunteering at the Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival, Ms. Hang suggested I demonstrate the đàn bầu throughout the afternoon as part of the live entertainment in the gymnasium (see figure 7.4).

Figure 7.4: An afternoon đàn bầu demonstration by the author at the Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival on September 17, 2016.
Still from a YouTube video of the event by Viet Vung Vinh, posted September 19, 2016.

Throughout the afternoon, I held four, 15-minute presentations each on đàn bầu. Audience members listened to songs performed on each instrument, asked questions, and tried their hand and playing the instruments. The size, demographics, and reaction of the audience to each demonstration session largely varied. During one of the sessions, the audience consisted of approximately twenty elderly Vietnamese Americans, who had recently arrived at the Tenderloin Recreation Center by bus from their retirement home. Finding a collection of empty chairs in the auditorium, the group sat down to rest, not necessarily realizing that a demonstration was about to take place. I began the demonstration by playing "Trống Cơm" (Rice Drum), a melody from northern Vietnam that I learned during my đàn bầu lessons with Phạm Kim Thành in Hanoi. After opening with "Rice Drum," I explained the basic organology of the monochord and presented a bit about

my graduate studies. Depending on the audience's interest, I would explain more about the đàn bầu or continue to play pieces I had learned during lessons with Mr. Thành in Hanoi with or Mr. Vũ Hồng Thịnh in San Jose.

The audience reaction to my đàn bầu playing was a mix of surprise and curiosity. Listeners asked questions about the history and organology of the đàn bầu, some trying their hand at producing harmonics on the monochord. Along with interest in the instrument, audience members were interested in how I became interested in the đàn bầu. I acknowledged that audience's interest in my performance was due in part to my outward appearance as a non-Vietnamese musician. Although I made several mistakes, audience members were generally kind and receptive to my performance. Ethnomusicologist Ricardo Trimillos notes that "the novelty of a foreigner [non-heritage musician] performing can sometimes lead the audience to forgive shortocmings in musicality or performance technique" (2004: 45). After my demonstration, Vietnamese-American audience members commented that they were interested to see a musician not from a Vietnamese background playing the đàn bầu and encouraged me to keep studying the instrument.

In preparing for my demonstration, I acknowledged the stakes of representing a culture that is not one's own and recognized that my status as a university researcher granted me institutional privildege. Ethnomusicologists have questioned the ethics implicit in representing culture through musical performance. Reflecing upon his experiences directing African music ensembles in the United States, David Locke confronts the ethical issues surroundinding these performances

within the historical legacies of western imperialism and orientalist representations. Locke argues that engaged and responsible musical performance has the political potential to challenge stereotypes and dominant narrarives. "Transparent communication of accurate information," Lock notes "is an anti-Orientalist act…because it enables the audience to form its own response" (2004: 187).

In my đàn bầu performance, I drew on the information I gained from lessons with my teachers in Vietnam and the diaspora. I then relied on my previous experiences in the university classroom to shape this information into a lecture-recital format. My đàn bầu demonstration thus used a combination of skills gained throughout my musical training. Considering her involvement with university Middle Eastern ensembles, ethnomusicologist Anne Rasmussen reflects that "whether or not one is born and bred in a musical tradition, one's musicality is the result of a patchwork of experience." (2004: 225) My involvement at the Southeast Asian Arts and Culture Festival reflects of my engagement with the đàn bầu and with Vietnamese music more broadly, experiences that inform my own musicality.

Another interaction with a festival attendee particularly stood out in my mind long after the event. As I was setting up my đàn bầu before the festival, a young girl shyly approached. She asked me if she could play the instrument, using the Google Translate app on a smart phone to translate the question from Arabic into English. Using old-fashioned pantomime and Google Translate to answer back in English, I explained how she could produce a harmonic on the string and move the stick to play a note. She smiled and giggled before running back to join her

friends. This experience of an American using Google Translate to explain in Arabic how to play a Vietnamese instrument reflects the diversity city of San Francisco and of the Tenderloin neighborhood in particular. The đàn bầu continues to function as an ambassador of Vietnamese culture in the twenty-first century diaspora, intersecting with issues of globalization and technology.

Musical performances also raise the question of what it means to celebrate "tradition" in the diaspora. The Sử Việt Zithers performance of a folk song medley, for example, represented a view of Vietnamese culture simultaneously rooted in the past and in the present: from the choice of music to the group's áo dài dress. Presenting "The Crow Caws" instead of a contemporary pop tune, for example, is a conscious choice to promote an imagined cultural form of the past. In the following section, I continue to explore how celebrations of the present draw upon narratives of the past, analyzing a commemoration ceremony for the 42nd anniversary of the Fall of Saigon.

"42 Years" Commemoration

Walking into the Tenderloin Recreation Center gymnasium on Sunday, April 9, 2017, I was greeted with the strong smell of ceremonial incense. In the back of the gymnasium, a man chanted the ceremony of *Lễ Giỗ Tổ Hùng Vương* or the Hùng Kings Anniversary Ceremony in heightened speech. To the left of the altar, set up at the far end of the gymnasium, a barrel drum punctuated segments of the text. I recognized Ms. Hang Le To of the Âu Cơ Center as one of four adults standing in front of the altar, hands clasped in prayer. Speaking with Ms. Hang after the

ceremony, she explained that the Hùng Kings were the "founding fathers" of Vietnam, a series of rulers in pre-modern Vietnam. A series of kings during the Hong Bang dynasty (2879-258 BCE), today the Hùng Kings are figures of national and cultural pride in contemporary Vietnam and its diaspora (Cherry 2009: 108).

That afternoon's Hùng Kings ceremony was part of an event commemorating the anniversary of the Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, formally titled "42 Years: Memorializing the Search for Freedom and Liberty, and Commemorating the Resettlement of the Vietnamese Refugees." Ms. Hang co-organized the event on behalf of the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center in collaboration with the Vietnamese Elderly Mutual Assistance Association of San Francisco, the first collaboration between the two groups (Hang Le To 2017). Held in the gymnasium of the Tenderloin Recreation Center, the occasion served as a memorial to the struggles of Vietnamese refugees, a showcase of Vietnamese cultural heritage, and a testament to the vibrancy of Vietnamese American organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The "42 Years" commemoration event solemnly remembered the past while celebrating the strength of the Vietnamese-American community gathered that afternoon. A poster advertising the event featured five photographs (see figure 7.5). Four smaller photographs portray a young woman playing the đàn tranh zither, a march of South Vietnamese Veterans, a young man demonstrating Wushu martial arts, and two young women in áo dài dresses dancing with Vietnamese conical hats. A background photo illustrates a boat of Vietnamese refugees. While the poster photograph of Vietnamese refugees pays tribute to the past, the photographs of

young Vietnamese-Americans engaged in events sponsored by the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center celebrate present achievements and the future of Vietnamese culture in diaspora.

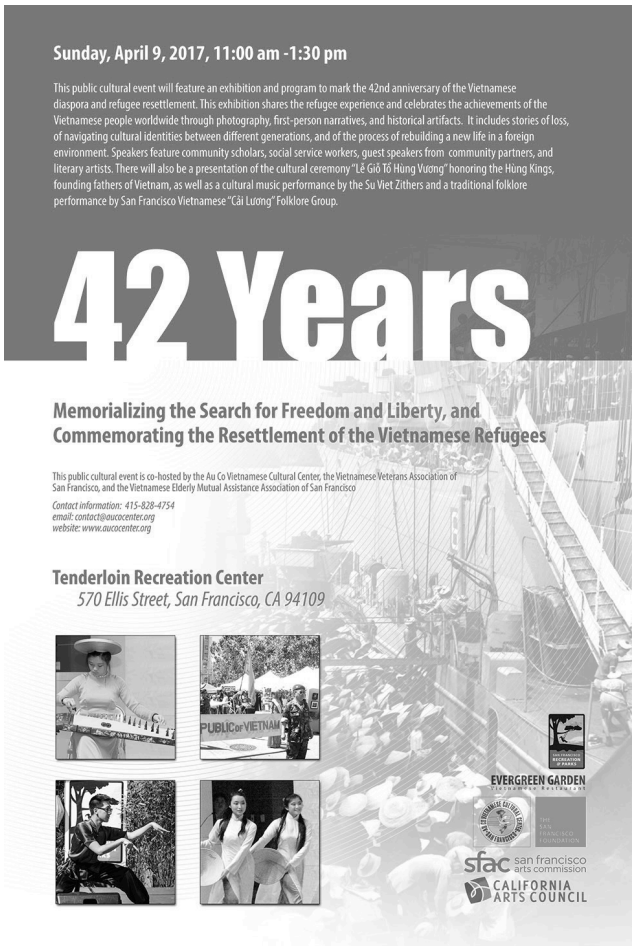

Figure 7.5: English-language event poster for the "42 Years" commemoration, co-organized by the Âu Cơ Center and the Vietnamese Elderly Mutual Assistance Association of San Francisco. The Âu Cơ Center also created and distributed a Vietnamese-language event poster.
Image from the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center website.

Throughout the event, audience members were free to move about the gymnasium, taking photos and chatting with friends. Beginning at approximately 10:30 am, the "42 Years" commemoration began on a festive note, with a lion dance

performed by members of the Âu Cơ Center. Next, veterans from the Vietnamese community performed a salutation ceremony to the flags of South Vietnam and of the United States, followed by a series of welcoming speeches by the event's organizers. The ceremony to the Hùng Kings was next, lasting about twenty minutes. Following the ceremony, members of the Vietnamese Elderly Mutual Assistance Association and Vietnamese Veterans of San Francisco gave a series of speeches in Vietnamese to commemorate the 42nd anniversary of the Fall of Saigon.

The longest segment of the afternoon, however, focused on Vietnamese music, dance, and martial arts demonstrations. The Sử Việt Zithers took the stage first, performing a medley of Vietnamese folk songs from the northern, central, and southern regions, arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ. On this particular Sunday, one đàn bầu and five đàn tranh players represented the Sử Việt Zithers group. Ms. Vân-Ánh was unable to attend, so the group's only male member, Christopher, guided the ensemble from his đàn bầu. The Sử Việt Zithers performed a medley, each representing an area of Vietnam. A pre-recorded backing track of additional đàn tranh and percussion supported the group. The first melody, "Trống Cơm" (Rice Drum), is from northern Vietnam. The ensemble repeated "Rice Drum" twice, occasionally moving ahead or falling behind the pre-recorded track, resulting in a heterophonic texture. The second melody, "Tùng Quân - Đăng Đàn Cung" (Melody on the Esplanade) is from central Vietnam. In a slower duple meter, "Melody on the Esplanade" featured the glissandi characteristic of Hue court music. In a faster duple meter, the final melody, "Khổng Minh Tọa Lầu" (Khổng Minh Atop the Defending Wall) showcased the rapid ornamentation style of southern Vietnamese chamber

music.[43] Rather than heterophonic variations, the group presented an upbeat homophonic version of the melody, for greater ease in performance.

Finishing the medley, the Sử Việt Zithers received thunderous applause from the smiling audience, clearing their instruments to make way for the next performance: a selection from a *cải lương* southern opera about Lady Triệu Thị Trinh. Described by the emcees as "the Vietnamese Joan of Arc," Lady Triệu is a celebrated as heroine in contemporary Vietnam, remembered for defending her kingdom against invading Chinese armies (for more about Lady Triệu see Taylor 1983: 90-91).

The Sử Việt Zithers folk song medley showcased Vietnamese culture by performing music associated with the pre-communist era. Scholars have noted the importance of pre-1975 popular music in distinguishing diaspora communities from contemporary Vietnam (Cunningham and Nguyen 1999). Folk song arrangements similarly articulate a Vietnamese past that is distinct from the current political order. As a genre of theater common in southern Vietnam, cải lương performances are further associated sentiments of nostalgia and loss, encapsulated in the genre's archetypal melody "Vọng cổ" (Longing for the Past). Khai Thu Nguyen notes that the genre is "significant for the ways it has, since its birth, enraptured audiences that have attached their senses of (southern) identity to its pervasive, nostalgic melodies" (2012: 257). The cải lương performance at the San Francisco

[43] Khổng Minh is a character in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms,* a 14th century dramatization of the Three Kingdoms period in China. I am grateful to Mr. Howard Lieu for explaination of this title and assistance with an English translation.

commemoration of the Fall of Saigon located the afternoon ceremony with larger diasporic narratives of Vietnam as a lost homeland.

Across the United States, Vietnamese-Americans often refer to the anniversary as "Black April," referring to April 30, 1975.[44] Ethnic studies scholar Thanh Thuy Vo Dang notes that "over the years, the event [Black April] has become a reliable site for coming together and reconnecting with friends and comrades from the old country and the refugee camps, enjoying live music and entertainment, staking a political position as refugees of communism and, most importantly, commemorating the loss of South Vietnam and mourning for the war and refugee dead" (Vo 2008: 106). At the Âu Cơ event commemorating Black April, musical performances of folk song arrangments and cải lương celebrated the vibrancy of Vietnamese culture in Northern California while acknowledging the legacies of loss and displacement within the community.

Along with musical performances, artwork displayed on easels around the gymnasium displayed famous Vietnamese legends. One painting depicted Lady Triệu, a young woman who led a rebellion against invading Chinese forces in the year 157. Ms. Hang Le To explained that she had recently purchased the artwork for this event, in order to educate young people about Vietnamese history. She intended to display the paintings at future Âu Cơ events, adding informative captions when she has time. In keeping with the theme of refugee resettlement, Ms. Hang Le To also created a display with information and photographs related to the history of

[44] Depending on political and historical viewpoint, Vietnamese also remember April 30, 1975 as Reunification of Saigon (*Ngày Thống nhất*) and Liberation Day (*Ngày Giải phóng*), among other names.

Vietnamese refugees who fled the country by sea. In the diaspora, historical narratives are intimately related to issues of preservation and cultural heritage.

From musical and visual depictions of legendary Vietnamese heroes to the Hùng Kings ceremony, the 42 Years commemoration highlighted a distant Vietnamese past as a celebration of Vietnamese-American culture in the present. Drawing on the past to conceptualize the present is not a phenomenon isolated to the 42 Years commemoration, but connects with broader nationalist epistemologies. Historian Wynn Wilcox identifies this practice in Vietnamese nationalism as allegory, or "a story told about a capstone event in the past that also provides a moral backdrop to the historian's present events, an explanation of past and present at the same time." (2011: 2) Remembering the Fall of Saigon, the story of Lady Triệu's rebellion (a defense of the country against foreign aggressors) historicizes the loss of South Vietnam and continued resistance against the current communist state.

History as allegory is particularly evident when the preservation of cultural memory is at stake. As one of the 42 Years emcees reminded the crowd while introducing the Sử Việt Zithers: "We want the next generation of Vietnamese-Americans to understand and to appreciate our culture, this history, and its people. The performances you will see today will share and pass on our culture and traditions to the next generation." (Event notes, April 9, 2017) Memorializing the struggles of Vietnamese refugees, the commemoration creates an implicit connection between legendary heroes—celebrated for defending an imagined young Vietnamese nation against foreign invaders—and Vietnamese refugees in

diaspora. In the diaspora, legends from the distant past and oral histories from a more recent past concerning the "capstone event" of the Fall of Saigon, frame the impetus to remember and preserve Vietnamese heritage in the present.

In the following section, I pursue the connections between historical allegory, musical representation, and Vietnamese identity in the diaspora further. In examining a composition by Vân Ánh Vanessa Võ, reflecting on the flight of Vietnamese refugees by sea, I consider how Vietnamese Americans draw parallels between the "boat people" refugee crisis and contemporary political issues. Within this discussion, the đàn bầu acts as a vehicle for rendering refugee experiences audible.

Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

"This is the Vietnamese đàn bầu, a one-string instrument from the 9th century," musician Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ explains to the audience on American National Public Radio's popular "Tiny Desk Concert" series. "This was invented by the bad girls on the street," she went on to explain with a laugh, "so that's why its very simple, one string and that's it!" (NPR 2014). Following this introduction to the monochord, Ms. Vân Ánh performed a piece from her 2013 album *Three Mountain Pass:* an arrangement of French composer Erik Satie's *Gnossienne No. 3* (1893) for đàn bầu and pre-recorded đàn tranh accompaniment. With a slow tempo and step-wise melodic progression, Satie's third *Gnossienne* is particularly well-suited for the đàn bầu, allowing Ms. Vân Ánh to carefully demonstrate the microtonal, pitch-bending capabilities of the instrument. In the liner notes to *Three Mountain Pass,* Ms. Vân Ánh

reflects that she was inspired to arrange the piece for đàn bầu after studying the piano score, noting that "it finally felt right" when she wrote a chordal accompaniment for the đàn tranh (2013). In an *Los Angeles Times* review of the album, music critic Marc Swed commented that *Three Mountain Pass* "interestingly begs the question of what is American music, especially since a knockout on the disc is her transcription of French composer Erik Satie's 'Gnossienne No. 3.'" (2013) Swed's comment alludes to the intersection of cultures in Ms. Vân-Ánh's transcription: a melody by a French composer arranged for a Vietnamese instrument by an American composer.

While *Three Mountain Pass* earned Ms. Vân-Ánh recognition in the United States, she was a renowned musician in Vietnam before moving to Fremont, California in 2001. Beginning to study the đàn tranh at age four, Ms. Vân-Ánh studied at the National Academy of Music in Hanoi as well as with private master teachers in her neighborhood. After graduating from the National Academy, she became an instructor at the school while also performing at the National Theater and for the Thang Long Water Puppet Theater and touring internationally (Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ 2017). In 1995, she embarked on her first concert tour in the United States. In San Francisco, she met her future husband, a Vietnamese-American who immigrated as a child "My husband was a refugee and boat person but he's been here a long time," Ms. Vân-Ánh explained (Lam 2016). After five years, the couple married and Ms. Vân-Ánh moved to the Bay Area in 2001.

Arriving in California, Ms. Vân-Ánh found it difficult to continue her career performing traditional music in the Bay Area. "I was a national champion in

Vietnam," Ms. Vân-Ánh declared, "I was in newspapers, everyone knew me….and in moving here, I became no one!" she reminded me with a laugh. While American audiences found the music unfamiliar, Vietnamese audiences in the diaspora were suspicious of a musician from northern Vietnam. "I wasn't very welcome," she recalled, "because I am purely from northern Vietnam, I have my Hanoian accent." One of her first concerts in California is a particularly painful memory for Ms. Vân-Ánh. "During the intermission," she remembers, "I came out to meet the people and they pointed straight to my face and said that I am a Viet Cong." (Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ 2017) Frustrated, Ms. Vân-Ánh stopped performing publicly in 2001, devoting her attention to starting a family.

Although Ms. Vân-Ánh encountered these difficulties after moving to California, she also found that she discovered more artistic freedom. From 2001 to 2010, she composed new works for Vietnamese instruments—including an Emmy-nominated score for the film *Bolero 52.* After taking a ten-year hiatus from public performance, she returned to the stage in 2010. This time, however, Ms. Vân-Ánh decided to only perform music that she felt spoke to her personally, that she feels "reveals the root of the culture of Vietnam while at the same time speaking to what I feel." (Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ 2017). After 2010, she actively began composing music for public performance, experimenting with combining Vietnamese instruments like the including the đàn bầu with western instruments, Taiko drums, handmade instruments, and other timbres that she felt symbolized the musical soundscape surrounding her life in California. "I think of myself as a tree," she mused, "I moved

here [to California], I uprooted myself, but now I have to bear fruit in this weather." (ibid.)

Her first album, *Three Mountain Pass,* was a testament to the "fruit" of Ms. Vân-Ánh's work in California, featuring new works for đàn bầu and đàn tranh as well as a collaboration with the Kronos String Quartet. Returning to the stage, however, Ms. Vân-Ánh gained prestige from cultural institutions in the United States. This visibility allows Ms. Vân-Ánh to draw attention to Vietnamese culture within the diaspora.

Soon after completing *Three Mountain Pass,* Ms. Vân-Ánh began a new project, inspired by the struggles of Vietnamese refugees. In discussing the war and its aftermath with Vietnamese friends in California, Ms. Vân-Ánh heard a variety of personal stories chronicling the refugee experience. Wanting to learn more, Ms. Vân-Ánh contacted a non-profit in the San Francisco Bay Area who connected her with more Vietnamese Americans willing to tell their stories. These oral histories formed the basis of Ms. Vân-Ánh's *The Odyssey: From Vietnam to America.*

The Odyssey is a five-part multi-media work. Along with Vân-Ánh Vo's original composition, the piece features video and images designed by artist Ian Winters and field recordings curated by composer Philip Blackburn.[45] Ms. Vân-Ánh wrote the piece for her ensemble, The VA'V. During the premiere, The VA'V

[45] *The Odyssey* received financial as well as artistic support from individuals and organizations in the San Francisco Bay. The Yerba Buena Center for the Arts commissioned *The Odyssey,* while private donors also supported the composition of individual movement. The Lâm family sponsored of "Nuoc—My Country" while the Do and Pham families sponsored "Light of Hope" and "Beyond the Seas."
As of this writing (2017) audio or video recordings of *The Odyssey* are not yet available in digital or physical media.

consisted of Ms. Vân-Ánh; cellist and vocalist Alex Kelly; Dan Cantrell on accordion, piano, and vocals; and Jimi Nakagawa on percussion and Taiko drums. In composing *The Odyssey,* Ms. Vân-Ánh paid particular attention to how various instrumental timbres could communicate the elements of the soundscapes described by her interviewees. The đàn bầu is particularly important in the first movement, "Leaving," which captures the refugee's flight from Vietnam in four parts. In the first section, "Flashback," Ms. Vân-Ánh plays a lullaby on the monochord to represent the memories of refugees who made the journey as young children. In front of projected images of ocean waves, Alex Kelly accompanies the lullaby on the cello, its timbre distorted by electronic effects. Ms. Vân-Ánh also plays an instrument she built specifically to replicate the sound of ocean waves: a large frame drum filled with beads. She then bases the second section, "War," on the rhythm of an SOS signal, played on a đông sơn style Vietnamese bronze drum. In the program notes, she writes that in Vietnam, villagers would use the bronze drum to warn of approaching danger. The final section, "Leaving," features the đàn bầu imitating the sound of a diesel boat engine. Along with sputtering and roaring sounds, the monochord also plays a recognizable melody, "Thuyền Viễn Xứ," which Ms. Vân-Ánh notes "has come to symbolize Vietnamese boat people floating on the open sea with no destination" (2016). In the following section, "Pirate," the đàn bầu again imitates a diesel boat engine, but with greater urgency. According to Ms. Vân-Ánh's description of these engine sounds, the Pirate engines are intended to be "steady, fast, uncaring, and irreverent sounds, like pirates who do not care about other human beings" (ibid).

While “Leaving” highlights the urgency of escape, the second movement, “Scorching Sun,” illustrates the mixture of emotions of the journey at sea in three parts. The first segment, “Scorching Sun” is peaceful, representing a calm moment at sea. Pantomiming cradling a baby, Ms. Vân-Ánh sings vocables from behind her đàn bầu. In the following section, “Lullaby,” Ms. Vân-Ánh first sings “Ru Con Nam Bộ” or Lullaby of the South. She then plays a variation on the lullaby melody on the đàn bầu, bowing the instrument with both the hair and the wood of the bow, resulting in a buzzing and then muted sound (see figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8: Still from the San Francisco world premiere of The Odyssey, included in a promotional video issued by the Asia Society Texas Center.
In the above photo, Ms. Vân-Ánh bows the đàn bầu, while projected images of arrival records from refugee camps in the Philippines move across wide pieces of white fabric, representing sails. Posted on YouTube by the Asia Society Texas Center on August 1, 2016.

Whereas these first two sections reflected moments of calm, the following section, “Thirst,” captured the physical and spiritual pains of the refugee journey, showcasing the dynamic power of the Taiko drums. One interview in particular led Ms. Vân-Ánh to write this section, a painful memory of abduction and rape by pirates.

The following movement "Nuoc [Water]—My Country: Sea of Tears" features a setting of Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hạnh's poem "Ấm Áp" (For Warmth), a reflection upon hearing of the violence and devastation of the 1968 massacre of Bến Tre city:

I hold my face between
my hands

no I am not crying

I hold my face between my hands
to keep my face loneliness warm

Two hands protecting
Two hands nourishing
Two hands to prevent

My soul from leaving
me in anger[46]

In the program notes, Ms. Vân-Ánh emphasized that the intention of including Thích Nhất Hạnh's poem in "My Country" was to "share a message of unity," building a stronger community by working together (ibid). As a symbolic gesture of this unity, the movement features a bi-lingual recitation of the poem. First Ms. Vân-Ánh read the text of "Ấm Áp" in Vietnamese after which cellist Alex Kelly repeated an English translation. Beginning again, their voices blended into two simultaneous, recitations. The recitation of the poem in both English and Vietnamese allows non-Vietnamese members of the audience to understand Thích Nhất Hạnh's text, but it is also an acknowledgement of the linguistic realities of

[46] Translation by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Vo.

diaspora. Vietnamese-American families are often bilingual, with multiple generations sometimes simultaneously weaving both languages together. “My Country” is thus a lament for a lost homeland and a consideration of the difficulties of incorporating into a new nation. Across regional divisions in the diaspora, Vietnamese-Americans have faced similar linguistic and social challenges of life in the United States. “My Country” acknowledges these shared struggles and looks towards a message of unity.

The fourth movement builds on this message of community. “Light of Hope: Awakening” describes the courage that refugees found in prayer during their difficult voyage and the refuge of places of worship during their resettlement. A field recording of worshippers singing in a church begins the movement, while Ms. Vân-Ánh sang vocables from behind her dan tranh. At this moment in *The Odyssey,* Ms. Vân-Ánh motioned for audience members to “light” the small, battery-powered candles we had all received at the door. As a result, the dark concert hall filled with glowing white light. During the final movement, “Beyond the Seas: The Americana—How About Us” reflected on the present, celebrating the contributions of Vietnamese refugees to American society. Ms. Vân-Ánh lit candles and incense at an altar on the stage.

Figure 7.9: Still from the San Francisco world premiere of The Odyssey. Mrs. Vân-Ánh prays before an altar, draped in red and yellow cloth, paying respects to photographs of family members given to her by interviewees. Posted on YouTube by the Asia Society Texas Center on August 1, 2016.

Closing with a prayer, "Light of Hope" reflects on the difficult journey of Vietnamese refugees by commemorating the sacrifices of the past and while looking towards the promise of the future. Having married into the Vietnamese-American diaspora, Ms. Vân-Ánh's personal odyssey to the United States is markedly different than that of the post-war refugees. On her Facebook page *The Odyssey*, Ms. Vân-Ánh explained that she hopes to bridge an "unspoken border between the North and South Vietnamese" through her music. "As there is no border in Vietnamese traditional music and as a traditional artist, I want to play music so that Vietnamese everywhere can all unite and proudly say, 'This is my country's music; and I am Vietnamese.'" (Facebook, The Odyssey from Vietnam to America February 12, 2016). As a musician from northern Vietnam, Ms. Vân-Ánh is aware of tension that separates northern and southern Vietnamese communities within the diaspora. She

works to bridge these divisions through an appeal to a shared sense of Vietnamese cultural identity. While Ms. Vân-Ánh identifies as a "traditional artist," her work combines elements of Vietnamese music (instruments, performance styles, and melodies) into new compositions. These new works are able to appeal to Vietnamese-American audiences because they occupy this hyphenated space of diasporic identity. They are Vietnamese but also American. Composed in the United States, *The Odyssey* is also free from suspected communist influence.

Conclusion

Sociologist Yen Le Espiritu has noted that: "as a people fleeing from the only war that the United States had lost, Vietnamese in the United States have been subject to intense scholarly interest—they are an 'overdocumented' population when compared to other US immigrant groups." (2006: 410) Written in the United States during another war (this time in Iraq and Afgahnistan), Espiritu reflects how the historical legacy of US military imperialism has led to the objectification and generalization of Vietnamese Americans as refugees. Discourse about Vietnamese-Americans, she argues, focuses on the Vietnam War while ignoring Vietnamese voices. Espiritu calls for a critical engagement with the ways in which Vietnamese-Americans engage with myriad identities in the diaspora.

Through exploring the work of the Âu Cơ Center and of Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ, I argue that the "vivid life" of the đàn bầu monochord in San Francisco offers particular insight into the intersections of musical politics, personal expression, and community building in the Vietnamese diaspora. At Âu Cơ Center events, the đàn

bầu represents a cultural heritage distinct from the contemporary Vietnamese state. The Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival used the đàn bầu as a symbol of Vietnamese history, representing Vietnamese heritage among other Southeast Asian cultures. At the "42 Years" commemoration event marking of the Fall of Saigon, the Âu Cơ Center showcased musical performances representative of pre-1975 Vietnam, including an excerpt fromcải lương southern musical theater and a folk song medley arranged for đàn bầu and đàn tranh zithers. These musical performances celebrated Vietnamese culture as a tribute to the sacrifices and resliance of the Vietnamese-American refugee experience. In the diaspora, the đàn bầu is able to represent a narrative of the Vietnamese past separate from the historiography of the nation state.

The historical legacy of the Vietnam-American war continues to divide diaspora communities in California. As a musician from Hanoi, Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ experienced hostility from southern Vietnamese audiences during her first concerts in the United States due to her associations with state musical institutions. A decade into her career as a Vietnamese-American musician, Ms. Vân-Ánh writes original compositions for Vietnamese instruments as a step towards reconciling these divides within diaspora communities. Similar to the Âu Cơ Center's musical performances, Ms. Vân-Ánh uses the đàn bầu to represent Vietnamese culture distanced from the nation state. Ms. Vân-Ánh's *The Odyssey* demonstrates that music in the diaspora has the power to acknowledge and to heal traumas of the past.

Chapter Eight. Conclusion

The đàn bầu is the site of interweaving narratives about Vietnamese history, cultural identity, and national character. The relationship between the đàn bầu and Vietnamese identity is fluid and multifarious. The resonances of the đàn bầu monochord from Vietnam to Australia, Canada, and the United States underscore the ways in which musical performance in diaspora reflects myriad cultural meanings.

The state of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam maintains a discourse that positions the đàn bầu as a musical representative of a pan-Vietnamese national culture, rooted in an imagined past. The distinctiveness of the đàn bầu from Chinese musical influences signifies the instrument as an object of cultural pride, while the instrument's pre-modern roots in the hát xẩm tradition allow the đàn bầu to represent the past. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has argued that the past is not "a limitless and plastic symbolic resource, infinitely susceptible to the whims of contemporary interest and the distortions of contemporary ideology," but rather it is a finite resource that must be negotiated (1981: 201). Appadurai postulates a series of frameworks to conceptualize how cultures construct norms around the past, including "authority," who determines credible sources; "continuity," how these authorities are connected with the past; "depth," how temporal space is measured and understood; and "interdependence," the degree to which multiple historiographies are reconciled to maintain plausibility (ibid: 203). These frameworks highlight how the Vietnamese state substantiates the đàn bầu as the

national instrument of Vietnam and how this substantiation further solidifies the state's power to frame a nationalist historiography.

Within the context of Vietnam, Appadurai's model applies to how state institutions are able to claim authority by claiming connections to an imagined Vietnamese past. Temporally, the Vietnamese state claims a continuous lineage within a thousand-year struggle for independence from foreign influence, including Chinese, French, and American occupations. Through his analysis of historical allegory, historian Wynn Wilcox has theorized how various competing twentieth-century historiographies that concern who "unified" Vietnam and at what point in history this unification occurred reflect of contemporary political projects of national identity (2011). Established in 1975, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam thus identifies its roots in a distant past through narratives of national unity. Dominant state narratives of national unity exist alongside oppositional, anti-communist political narratives in the diaspora.

Individual Vietnamese musicians navigate the cultural politics of the state to express their own artistic and career goals using the đàn bầu. Historian Ronald Grigor Suny notes that "the constructed nature of nationality or national consciousness, class or class consciousness should not be taken to mean that these are 'artificial' entities and therefore are illegitimate in some sense." (1993: 11) Suny acknowledges the role nationalist rhetoric in academia played within the larger narrative dramas of national historiographies, yet he is quick to add that national identity is not just echoes in the halls of academe, but is very much rooted in everyday experience. Musicians legitimately identify with the đàn bầu as a symbol of

Vietnam. The nature of this symbol is continually in flux, depending on historical and political location.

In the diasporas the đàn bầu is emblematic of Vietnamese identity, but musicians actively separate Vietnamese culture from the current state of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The đàn bầu remains a national instrument, but the dimensions of the "nation" are continually in flux. In *Rescuing History from the Nation,* historian Prasenjit Duara argues that national identity is a "fluid network of representations…nationalism is rarely the nationalism of *the nation,* but rather marks the site where different representations of the nation contest and negotiate with each other." (1995: 7-8) In the Vietnamese diaspora, the đàn bầu is a location where alternative definitions of Vietnamese identity are voiced and challenged.

Musicians and audiences use the đàn bầu to represent Vietnamese culture rooted in a pre-communist past, distanced from the current nation state. During the 2016 Festival of Vietnamese Music in Australia, performances showcased Hue court music, nhạc tài tử amateur chamber music, and cải lương theater: genres that audiences do not associate with the current state of Vietnam. Festival organizers stressed the relevance of Vietnamese traditional music performance within the Australian context, and established its temporal depth as an established practice that is "formed and developed for almost five thousand years." (Festival of Vietnamese Music 2016). During the 2016 festival, đàn bầu performance connected Vietnamese heritage with the past while asserting its place in the present, thus negotiated interdependent histories of "Vietnamese" and "Australian" identities. As a national instrument, the đàn bầu has cultural capital in Vietnam that hinges on

connecting the instrument to this imagined Vietnamese past, even though the contemporary monochord is a product of twentieth-century technologies (e.g., steel strings and amplification).

Music can attain cultural capital through a connection to the past. According to Bourdieu, material objects (such as musical instruments) aquire value through accumulated discourses surrounding the importance of the object to society (1986). Both the state and individual musicians imbue the đàn bầu with cultural capital by participating in dialogues situating the instrument in an imagined Vietnamese past. As an "invented tradition" (in the Hobsbawmian sense), đàn bầu performance is thus valued as an authentic expression of Vietnamese culture. Musicians can leverage their knowledge of đàn bầu for social status (within state institutions) and economic gain. The cultural capital of the đàn bầu is evidenced in ways the instrument is marketed towards tourist audiences. Performances at the Thang Long Water Puppet Theater often begin with an instrumental overture featuring the đàn bầu. By introducting the đàn bầu as the national instrument of Vietnam, the theater presents the instrument as a material and aural symbol of Vietnamese culture. Foreign tourists' interest in water puppet theater lends prestige to the genre and to Vietnamese music more broadly.

Ethnomusicologist Helen Rees has analyzed the cultural politics of international music tours in her discussion of the Dayan Ancient Music Association music tour to London in 1995. Comprised of musicians from the Naxi ethnic minority group in China, the Dayan Ancient Music Association began to carefully curate musical performances for tourists in Linjiang, the county seat of Yunnan

province, since the late 1980s. The tour to the United Kingdom, however, earned the recognition on both a national and international level. Rees notes that the participating Naxi musicians viewed the tour as "a strong validation of the worth and importance of the Naxi ethnic group, of Naxi culture, and of their homeland, Lijiang." (2002: 434) Similarly, the Thang Long Water Puppet Theater troupe has toured internationally, most recently performing in Poland and in Spain (Thang Long Water Puppet Theater, "News"). Performing for foreign audiences in Hanoi, the theater continues to validate Vietnamese culture through daily performances of water puppet theater.

Considering festivals of western art music in rural settings in Washington State, ethnomusicologist Vicki Brennan argues the connection between cultural capital and nostalgia. While these festivals appeal to urban tourists' pastoral imaginings, they also draw on the cultural prestige of western chamber music to attract listeners (1999: 22) At these festivals, western art music and rural settings are thus elided as representations of the past as cultural objects consumable through travel. On his work on the Zakopane resort region in the Poland Tatras, ethnomusicologist Timothy Cooley analyzes tourist performances as rituals symbolic of social identities and participants' perceptions of time or space (2005).

Đàn bầu performances in the UNESCO-recognized Hoi An Ancient Town demonstrate the ways in which Vietnamese institutions are invested in attaining and profiting from UNESCO recognition for musical practices involving the đàn bầu as "elements of intangible cultural heritage," further promoting the instrument as an essential representation of national culture. In the post-reform economy of twenty-

first century Vietnam, individual musicians as well as state organizations are able to financially benefit from the tourism industry. In Ho Chi Minh City, the Hoàng family has participated in private musical tours, hosting small groups of visitors in their home for carefully curated performances. Mr. Hoàng Anh, the family's son, continues to participate in music tours, and is currently investigating the potential of designing his own tours with the help of travel apps such as Triip.me. In contemporary Vietnam, đàn bầu performance in the tourism industry allows state organizations as well as private individuals the opportunity to profit from national discourse promoting the instrument as a cultural symbol of Vietnam.

Individual đàn bầu musicians in Vietnam negotiate the ontological status of the monochord as a "national instrument" in various ways to achieve their own artistic and career goals. Bourdieu further notes that aesthetic tastes are socially constructed, as:

> "…one dimension of a distant, self-assured relation to the world and to others which presupposes objective assurance and distance….Like every sort of taste, it unites and separates. Being the product of the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence, it unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others. And it distinguishes in an essential way, since taste is the basis of all that one has—people and things—and all that one is for others, whereby one classifies oneself and is classified by others." (Bourdieu 1984: 56)

Vietnamese musicians respond to audience expectations surrounding the đàn bầu to further their careers by differentiating what the đàn bầu is *not:* the instrument is Vietnamese, not Chinese or western, and the instrument is connected to an ancient past. For example đàn bầu musician Nguyễn Xuân Hoạch performs an

acoustic đàn bầu he built by hand in his home workshop in Hanoi. As part of the *Đông Kinh Cổ Nhạc* (the Ancient Music Group of Tonkin) Nguyễn Xuân Hoạch positions acoustic performance as an authentic representations of Vietnamese traditional music. The Ancient Music Group works to draw more audience members to traditional music concerts not through innovation (e.g., experiemental đàn bầu techniques) but through a return to a historically informed performance practice. As Bourdieu notes in the social construction of aesthetic taste, the Ancient Music Group of Tonkin performances distinguish acoustic music performance temporally, sonically, and visually from concerts of amplified music. The group classifies its performances as "ancient," compared to contemporary music. The acoustic đàn bầu is visually and audibly distanced from an amplified đàn bầu with steel strings. Through these markers of difference, the Ancient Music Group of Tonkin is able to market its performances as essentially distinct from contemporary practice.

The Ancient Music Group of Tonkin's approach to performance contrasts with state narratives. Through innovation, state institutions seek to preserve the status of the đàn bầu as a national instrument. This preservation narrative is less about the physical instrument or historically informed performance practices as it is with maintaining the cultural capital of the đàn bầu. Discourse surrounding innovation and the đàn bầu similarly emphasizes the instrument's Vietnamese identity. State institutions frame changes to the đàn bầu as progressive adaptations, allowing the instrument to thrive in the modern world. These changes do not threaten the historical authenticity of the đàn bầu but rather protect its status as a Vietnamese national instrument. A symposium held by the National Academy of

Music in Hanoi on October 8, 2015 that focused solely on the state of đàn bầu performance. At the symposium, participants discussed the popularity of the đàn bầu in China. One participant stressed that unless more Vietnamese students take up the đàn bầu, "it will become an instrument of China." Symposium participants stressed innovation as the key to drawing attention to the đàn bầu in order to maintain its status as a "national instrument." This preservation narrative postulates that đàn bầu performance, as an element of traditional Vietnamese culture is in danger of degradation or disappearance, and thus the instrument is in need of strategic promotion and protection.

In the Vietnamese diaspora, musicians use the đàn bầu to represent their individual articulation of their Vietnamese heritage, while simultaneously expressing the intersections of personal and political priorities. In Australia, Đặng Kim Hiền uses the đàn bầu to express her identities as a Vietnamese Australian and as a working mother through her piece "On a Quivering String" (2005). With "Melodia Nostalgica" (2013), however, Đặng Kim Hiền turns towards Vietnam, exploring how everyday sounds in Australia, such as birdsong and falling rain, trigger memories of the Vietnamese landscape. In Canada, composer Hoàng Ngọc Bích also draws inspiration from Vietnamese ecological landscapes, as featured in "River of Memory" (2017) for đàn bầu and chamber orchestra. Both "Melodia Nostalgica" and "River of Memory" utilize sonic imagery to question linear time, distorting the boundaries of past and present while simultaneously challenging the border between "Vietnam" and "diaspora" in the space of personal memories.

With Ms. Bích's 2017 performance of *River of Memory* in Vietnam, re-arranged for a chamber orchestra of Vietnamese instruments, she further physically complicates the a division between "center" and "periphery" in the Vietnamese diaspora. Ethnomusicologist Alexander Cannon challenges this dialectic, noting the existence of a third, virtual space. Cannon notes that "contemporary performances of Vietnamese traditional music in diaspora exist within a virtual realm of negotiation, or trans-nation, comprised of Vietnamese actors around the world and including at least one in Vietnam." (2012: 124) While Cannon is specifically referring to performances of nhạc tài tử chamber music, his observation is also applicable to performances of new works for Vietnamese instruments.

Đàn bầu musicians in Vietnam and in the diaspora interact, relate, and collaborate through physical travel and virtually with new communication technologies, illustrating how a "national" instrument operates within a transnational space. Performing "River of Memory" in Vietnam, Vietnamese-Canadian music Hoàng Ngọc Bích shared her scores with musicians in Vietnam. "I was the only musician to come from abroad, and they were very excited about the piece," she noted. Through this physical performance and in subsequent digital communication, Ms. Bích is able to maintain an international dialogue with musicians in Vietnam.

Musicians in the diaspora use the đàn bầu to express cultural, national, and personal identities. The Vietnamese diaspora is not a monolith, and these case studies require consideration within their specific geographic, historical, and political locations, in order to speak to specific experiences. Discourse surrounding

đàn bầu performance in the Vietnamese diaspora connects the instrument to an imagined Vietnamese past, similar to the narratives presented within the state of Vietnam, but to very different political ends. In Vietnam, the state promotes the đàn bầu to affirm a nationalist teleological narrative in which musical institutions protect and preserve Vietnamese culture. In the diaspora, musicians distance themselves from Vietnamese state institutions and instead use the history of the đàn bầu as a symbol of Vietnamese culture within the dominant cultures of the diaspora. Here it is useful to return to Appadurai's model for cultural norms of the past: "authority," "continuity," "depth," and "interdependence." (1981: 203) In the diaspora, musicians hold particular authority to represent Vietnamese culture, particularly if their music is temporally based in traditions associated with pre-1975 Vietnam. I witnessed this phenomenon firsthand while conducting fieldwork in the San Francisco Bay Area: informants granted me a certain amount of credibility after learning I study đàn bầu with Mr. Vũ Hồng Thịnh, whom they respect as "master musician" for his interpretations of southern Vietnamese musical genres and popular melodies.

In the United States, vehement anti-communism among Vietnamese community organizations manifests in a strong rejection of all cultural forms and national symbols associated with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, including

music.[47] Reviewing criticism in the Vietnamese-American diaspora of Vietnamese popular music and video as communist propaganda, ethnomusicologist Adelaida Reyes has traced the rise of diaspora-generated Vietnamese media in Southern California influenced by pre-1975 genres and artists.

In the San Francisco Bay Area of Northern California, the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center negotiates its place within this complex web of personal and political identities. During the 2016 Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival—an event co-organized with the Southeast Asian Arts and Culture Coalition—the Âu Cơ Center represents Vietnam during a multi-cultural celebration. The organization presents a narrative of traditional Vietnamese culture supported by a đàn bầu and đàn tranh zither performance, a đàn bầu demonstration, and displays of other Vietnamese musical instruments. The absence of any national symbols such as flags or anthems from any Southeast Asian group was starkly noticeable at the festival. By avoiding national symbols, the event was able downplay political tensions among participating groups. The "imagined communities" of nations in diaspora emphasized diverse cultural identity (through food, music, and dance) rather than associations with symbols of the state (Anderson 1983).

In contrast with the Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival, hosted by the Âu Cơ Center in commemoration of the 42nd anniversary of the fall of Saigon in April 2017 focused more closely on aligning the diaspora community with South Vietnam. The

[47] In January 2017, the city of San Jose passed a measure banning the flying of Vietnam's flag on any city flagpole (Giwargis 2017). The measure passed following a vociferous debate between older Vietnamese Americans who arrived in the US as political refugees and more recent immigrants who maintain ties to the Socialist Republic Vietnam. Beyond the flying of flags, this debate reflects a larger controversy surrounding diasporic relationships to Vietnam.

flying of the Freedom and Heritage Flag and the singing of "Tiếng Gọi Công Dân" were strong visual and aural symbols of pre-1975 Vietnamese political culture. Co-sponsored with the Vietnamese Elderly Mutual Assistance Association, the commemoration event memorialized the experiences of Vietnamese refugees through speeches, educational posters, and through the performance of popular songs nostalgic for a lost homeland. These musical performances also showcased the đàn bầu, performing a medley of Vietnamese folk songs with an ensemble of đàn tranh zithers, as a sonic representation of a pre-communist past. Comprised mostly of young musicians, the Sử Việt Zithers ensemble represents the Âu Cơ Center's mission to foster cultural continuity for young people in the California diaspora. As an emcee announced before the Sử Việt Zithers' performance, the group is under the instruction of a master musician— Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ—thus maintaining cultural authority.

Outside of public events, the Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center incorporates national symbols into its community programs. Visiting Âu Cơ's weekend language program for young heritage speakers one Saturday in February 2016, I participated in the afternoon flag ceremony. During a salutation to the "Freedom and Heritage Flag" of South Vietnam, followed by the singing of the South Vietnamese anthem "Tiếng Gọi Công Dân," I noticed that not all of the students actively participated in the ceremony. An Âu Cơ volunteer explained that the school realizes some students, particularly more recent immigrants to the US would not feel comfortable singing "Tiếng Gọi Công Dân" because of their divergent historical understanding of the anthem. The organization agreed to keep participation optional in the spirit of

community. J. Martin Daughtry observes that although anthems are understood to represent the nation, this representation is complicated by the fact that "ideologies and collective self-images are subject to the conflicting and ever-changing interpretations of groups and individuals within nations and as such are always conditional, contestable, and fluid" (2003: 42). Daughtry's observation is further complicated considering how the process of "ever-changing interpretations" continues outside of the nation in the context of diaspora. At the Âu Cơ Center, the anthem "Tiếng Gọi Công Dân" represents the "collective self-image" of the Âu Cơ community. Singing the anthem positions the group politically against the current regieme of Vietnam and serves as a testament to the legacies of the refugee experience within the community. Keeping the singing of "Tiếng Gọi Công Dân" optional, however, allows for fluid interpretations of this self-image by acknowledging that members of the Âu Cơ community have various positionalities towards the Vietnamese state.

Particular tension exists between southern Vietnamese communities and artists from northern Vietnam with connections to Vietnamese state institutions. Vietnamese-Canadian musician Hoàng Ngọc Bích observed that she and her husband, Hồ Khắc Chí, encountered particular hostility during their early tours in the United States because of Mr. Chí's former position in the Ministry of Culture in Hanoi. She recalled a particular incident when a concert at a university in California had to be cancelled due to pushback from the Vietnamese community. "The university had a lot of Vietnamese students," she stated. "But the organizer had to cancel our show because the community there threatened that if they allowed us to

perform they would protest. Of everyone who came [to California] from Vietnam, only very few were communists. But unfortunately a few of those people represented the [northern] Vietnamese community. So that was why our show was cancelled." (Hoàng Ngọc Bích 2017b). Hoàng Ngọc Bích's experience illustrates the hostility within Vietnamese communities in California towards northern Vietnamese musicians associated with state organizations.

Vietnamese-American artist Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ encountered similar difficulties as a northern Vietnamese musician in California. As a more recent Vietnamese American, Ms. Vân-Ánh faced hostility as a northerner and among southern Vietnamese communities in the Bay Area in the early 2000s. Her musical education from the National Academy of Music in Hanoi was also suspect among the California diaspora. Ms. Vân-Ánh suspects that her association with Vietnamese institutions kept her from securing grant funding to perform traditional Vietnamese music. "I kept getting turned down," she stated. "Maybe whoever was reviewing the application was from the south, saw that I graduated from the Hanoi Academy of Music, and assumed that I am VC [Viet Cong]" (Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ 2017).

After writing new compositions for Vietnamese instruments, Ms. Vân-Ánh gained prestige from institutions in the United States including an Emmy nomination and an invitation to perform at Lincoln Center in Washignton D.C. Within Appadurai's framework (1981), these new works distinguish Ms. Vân-Ánh from the authority of Vietnamese musical institutions while maintaining continuity with the Vietnamese cultural past through musical instruments. Her work bridges temporal space, expressing the artist's personal and cultural identities as a

Vietnamese American while simultaneously representing an established Vietnamese musical tradition through choices in instrumentation and other musical idioms.

Whereas Ms. Vân-Ánh was initially met with suspicion and skepticism during her early musical career in the United States, nearly twenty years later she is a respected member of the Vietnamese American musical community for her original, experimental works for Vietnamese instruments. In *The Odyssey: From Vietnam to America* (2016), Ms. Vân-Ánh commemorates the stories of Vietnamese "boat people," refugees who fled Vietnam through a dangerous journey at sea. Vietnamese instruments, specifically the đàn bầu, are at the center of this musical narrative. In *The Odyssey*, the đàn bầu is able to communicate the struggles of a dangerous journey at sea, the calm of a lullaby, and the hopeful spirit of Vietnamese refugees.

With a single string, the đàn bầu has a rich tonal palate capable through which musicians express a variety of emotions. The appearance of the Vietnamese đàn bầu conceals the instrument's complicated performance techniques. As an aspiring đàn bầu player, one may learn how to produce sound on the monochord within a matter of weeks, but it takes years to master the subtle, barely perceptible hand gestures essential to a rich, expressive tone. On the surface, the construction of the đàn bầu belies its critical role in the cultural history of Vietnam and its diaspora. The relationship between Vietnam and the diaspora continues to rapidly shift, reflecting demographic, political, and technological changes. It remains to be seen how the đàn bầu will sound these changes in the new millennium, reflecting cultural values in Vietnam and beyond.

Glossary of Terms

áo dài:	A traditional Vietnamese dress worn by men and women. The women's áo dài is a long, form-fitting dress worn over trousers. The men's áo dài is a long, loose-fitting tunic also worn over trousers.
bài chòi:	A type of musical game and vocal genre from south central Vietnam. Its theatrical form is known as *hát bài chòi* or *kịch hát bài chòi*.
ca Huế:	A form of vocal music characteristic of Central Vietnam, particularly of the former imperial capital city of Huế.
ca ra bộ:	("Gesture coming out of song") Antecedent to cải lương theater, combined musical elements of hát bội and nhạc tài tử as well as music and stories from Chinese ethnic minorities in southern Vietnam.
ca trù:	Also known as *hát ả đào*, ca trù is a vocal genre characteristic of Northern Vietnam. Featuring sung poetry, ca trù typically features a female vocalist accompanied by a *đàn đáy* three-string lute (usually performed by a male musician).
cải lương:	("Reform" or "Renovated" theater) A syncretic theatrical genre that emerged in the early 20th century blending Vietnamese theatrical traditions (e.g., ca ra bộ and hát bội) with elements of French and Chinese aesthetics.
đàn bầu xẩm:	An acoustic antecedent to the contemporary đàn bầu, often performed by blind musicians. Before the twentieth century, blind musicians (or hát xẩm) were ubiquitous in Vietnam.
đàn đáy:	A Vietnamese long-necked lute with three strings and the principal instrumental accompaniment in ca trù.
đàn độc huyền:	Literally "one string instrument," đàn độc huyền is another name for the đàn bầu monochord.

đàn nguyệt: A two-string plucked lute, also known as the *đàn kìm* or *đàn cầm*.

đàn nhị: A Vietnamese spike fiddle with two strings.

đàn tam thập lục: A Vietanamese hammered dulcimer with thirty-six strings.

đàn tranh: An Vietnamese plucked zither, typically with sixteen strings.

đàn t'rưng: A bamboo xylophone of the Bahnar and Jarai ethnic groups in Vietnam's Central Highlands.

đàn tỳ bà: A four-string Vietnamese plucked lute.

đổi mới: Translating to "renovation," a series of political reforms in Vietnam beginning in the late 1980s shifting the country towards a socialist-oriented economy.

đờn ca tài tử: A genre of amateur chamber music characteristic of Southern Vietnam. Musically similar to *nhạc tài tử,* đờn ca tài tử is primarily a vocal genre.

hát bội: A form of Vietnamese opera, influcenced by Chinese theater. Called *hát tuồng* in northern Vietnam.

nhạc dân tộc hiện đại: "Modern national music," a genre of contemporary music for Vietnamese instruments using the frameworks of western music. A genre promoted by the Vietnamese conservatory system, nhạc dân tộc hiện đại refers to the past to express presentist concerns.

nhạc tài tử: A genre of amateur chamber music characteristic of Southern Vietnam.

hát bội:	Also known as *hát tuồng* or *hát bộ*, hát bội is a form of Vietnamese traditional opera dating from approximately the thirteenth century.
hát chèo:	A form of Vietnamese folk musical theater characteristic of Northern Vietnam, typically satirical in nature. Hát chèo also forms the musical basis of *múa rối nước* or Vietnamese water puppet theater.
kni:	A mouth violin chordophone of the Jarai minority group in Vietnam. State musical institutions have incorporated the kni, along with the k'lông pút and the đàn t'rưng into musics of the Việt majority.
k'lông pút:	A bamboo xylophone of the Bahnar minority group in Vietnam's Central Highlands, incorporated into state musical institutions.
múa rối nước:	Vietnamese water puppet theater, featuring vignettes of legends and folk tales accompanied by an ensemble of Vietnamese instruments.
quốc ngữ:	Literally, "national script," the Vietnamese alphabet in Latin script. Created by 17th century Portuguese missionaries and widely adopted in the twentieth century.
tân nhạc:	A broad musical form emergent in the 1930s that combined elements of western music (staff notation and western instrumentation, for example) with Vietnamese instruments and musical idioms.
yixianqin:	Also known as the *duxianqin or* "lone string zither," the yixianqin is a Chinese monochord similar to the đàn bầu.

Appendix A: List of Major Vietnamese Musical Institutions

Vietnamese Institute for Musicology (*Viện Nghiên Cứu Âm Nhạc*)

Established during the 1950s, first under the direction of composer Lưu Hữu Phước

Vietnam National Academy of Music (*Học viện Âm nhạc Quốc gia Việt Nam*)

Located in Hanoi

Established as the Vietnam National Music School (*Trường Âm Nhạc Việt Nam*) in 1956

Renamed the Hanoi Music Conservatoire (*Nhạc viện Hà Nội*)

Renamed the Vietnam National Academy of Music (*Học viện Âm nhạc Quốc gia Việt Nam*)

Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music *(Nhạc viện Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh)*

Located in Ho Chi Minh City

Established as the National School of Music (*Trường Quốc Gia Âm Nhạc*) in 1956

Renamed the Ho Chi Minh City Music School in 1975

Renamed the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music in 1980

Huế Conservatory of Music

Located in Huế

Established as the National School of Music (*Trường Quốc Gia Âm Nhạc*) in 1962

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