



A NEW VOICE: AUSTRALIAN GUITAR MUSIC WITH VIETNAMESE CULTURAL INFLUENCES

by

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STATEMENT

I hereby declare that the thesis herein, submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University, is the result of my own research. I am the sole author of this thesis; all quotations, ideas and work of other scholars have been clearly acknowledged.

Le-Tuyen Nguyen

28th May 2018

This study is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather Mr Trần Văn Hực
who hoped that one day I would acquire a doctorate degree.

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ABSTRACT

For more than fifty years, Australian composers have continued to look for new musical ideas and inspiration in the music of other cultures demonstrating significant interest in the music of China, Bali, Java, Japan and the Pacific. This thesis aims to contribute to the Australasian musical interchanges with a repertoire of guitar music with Vietnamese cultural influences. Based on ethnomusicological research, these creative works will weave together Vietnamese social-cultural contexts and musical materials with Western art music styles, exploring and enhancing the musical-technical possibilities of the guitar as the expressive medium. International collaborations have extended this repertoire to ensemble performances of guitar and Vietnamese traditional instruments; guitar and Vietnamese Gong ensemble; and guitar and percussion from Europe, Africa, India, Tibet, China, Middle East, and the Caribbean. In the process of ethnomusicological research into Vietnamese and French primary sources, this thesis has also made original contributions shedding new light on the changes and development of Southern Vietnamese traditional music in the late nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century. A new voice in Australian music, this creative project is an expression of tradition, innovation and global interaction.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1960s, the prominent Australian musicologist Roger Covell noted that Australians would flourish together in “the most fecund musical culture that has ever existed on earth” with musical interchanges between Australia and its Asia-Pacific neighbours (Covell 1967, 290). His vision has appeared to be prophetic. For more than fifty years, Australian composers have continued to look for new musical ideas and inspiration in the music of other cultures demonstrating significant interests in the music of China, Bali, Java, Japan and the Pacific.

Australian composers who were born elsewhere have also contributed to the trend of Australian music with Asia-Pacific influences. For example, the composer Larry Sitsky was born in China of Russian-Chinese parents and later migrated to Australia in the 1960s. Sitsky has used Chinese traditional music as a source of inspiration for many of his compositions. Also born in China and settling in Australia at the age of twenty-seven, Julian Yu has also incorporated Chinese traditional music in his works. Adrian Pertout was born in Chile and migrated to Australia when he was seven. Interestingly, Pertout has also used Asian materials in his compositions.

For fifty years, the Australian narrative from Covell’s predictive outlook to the musical interchanges in the Asia-Pacific, “between western-trained musicians who have become excited by the properties of non-western music and (of) musicians from non-European races who have eagerly chosen to adopt many of the techniques of the European tradition” (Covell 1967, 290), has gradually manifested within Australia itself. Starting in the late 1970s with the Fraser government’s decision to end the White Australia policy, Australia has increasingly become a society of cultural diversity with the awareness and acceptance of other non-European cultures. Asian cultures have also been included in this transformation which continues to shape the Australian identity.

As a multi-cultural society, Australia can be perceived as a miniature scene of the Asia-Pacific. Stephen FitzGerald wrote positively about the Asian influences in this process:

It does not mean abandonment of what is Australian. On the contrary, it means, or should mean, the strongest possible affirmation of an Australian Australia as the political culture within which Asianisation in our society can take place (Fitzgerald 1997, 63)

In these historical, social, and musical contexts; in many ways I believe that I exemplify Covell's vision of the Asia-Pacific as a contemporary Australian musician. I was born and grew up in Vietnam during the Vietnam War, migrating to Australia in 1988 and becoming an Australian citizen in 1991. During my younger years in Vietnam, I was attracted much more to American popular music and Western classical music than Vietnamese traditional music, which was heavily 'modernised' with urban rock bands. Arriving in Australia, I studied an Associate Diploma of Music Teaching at the Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University). In the 1990s, I moved to Sydney and completed a combined Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education degree at the University of New South Wales where I was trained in musicianship, performance, musicology, composition and ethnomusicology. I was fortunate to be able to study with prominent musicologist Professor Roger Covell and ethnomusicologist Dr Jill Stubbington. During my years at the University of New South Wales, an awareness of the existence of Australian music with Asian influences awakened my interest in Vietnamese traditional music. I started composing with Vietnamese material and presented the new compositions to my lecturers.

Since graduating in 1996, I have taught Music at Australian high schools and held leadership roles within the New South Wales Department of Education. My teaching expertise covers four areas: Composition, Musicology, Aural Skills, and Performance,

which are the requirements for Music 2 and Music 1 of the New South Wales Higher School Certificate (HSC). Throughout these years, I have composed and arranged for solo piano, solo guitar, instrumental ensembles, concert band, rock band, solo voice and choir. My compositions have also been performed in the HSC Music Examinations. Since 1999 my composition *I Learn to Live* has become the official song of Fairvale High School. Alongside music education, I have remained active as a performer, giving concerts in Australia (Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide and Darwin) and internationally (France, Korea, Seoul, Vietnam and USA) as a solo guitarist, soloist with orchestra, and a member of guitar ensembles. I have also presented academic papers at national and international conferences.

The ability to speak and write fluently in Vietnamese, together with mainstream musical experience as an Australian musician and educator, have given me the skills, opportunity and sense of ‘mission’ to contribute to the trend of Australian music with Asian influences. My endeavour will be a new voice which reflects the contribution made by Australian composers with a Vietnamese background to Australian art music. From a global perspective, my creative project will contextualise an Australian contribution to “the most fecund musical culture that has ever existed on earth” – the Australasian-Pacific region in the twenty-first century.

RESEARCH AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This thesis aims to contribute to, and raise awareness of the Vietnamese musical culture and its role in Australasian musical interchanges with a first comprehensive collection of Australian music with Vietnamese cultural influences written for guitar. These creative works will be based on an ethnomusicological study of Vietnamese traditional music whereby research results on Vietnamese musical material and cultural context will be used as a source of inspiration. Each composition will reflect the exploration of

the musical and technical possibilities of the guitar as the expressive medium, weaving together Vietnamese and Western art music styles. The process of applying Vietnamese ethnomusicological research to contemporary composition is likely to nurture the development of new creative idioms for the formation of a new voice in Australian music.

From the earliest stages of this study, I have realised the challenge to have an appropriate definition for Vietnamese music due to its diverse ethnicity, complex history and social - cultural changes. Within the scope of this study, the term ‘Vietnamese music’ is used in a political boundary/context of music within Vietnamese territory up to 2018. Similarly, the term ‘Australian music’ used in this study refers to Australian art music of the Commonwealth of Australia since 1788 to the present. It does not cover other musical genres in Australia or attempt to define the characteristics of Australian music.

Throughout this thesis, even though I have attempted to translate all Vietnamese musical terms into English, due to the loss in translation which could lead to misinterpretation, I have decided to keep some of these terms in their original language. Even though I have looked into most Vietnamese musical genres in the process of finding appropriate materials for this project, this study does not intend to be a comprehensive survey of Vietnamese music. The ethnomusicological research will give a general overview of Vietnamese musical elements and a more detailed study of selected representatives from three main regions of Vietnam as a source of compositional inspiration.

The creative works are written for the standard acoustic guitar with six nylon strings without any ‘prepared’ object attached to it. Methods of sound production and performing techniques are the guitarist’s two hands only. Even though other methods of

sound production with objects have been explored, I decided that they would be unnecessary within the scope of this thesis. ‘Prepared’ objects include violin bow, plectrums, chopsticks, spoons, beer bottle, percussion mallets and electric hand fans.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

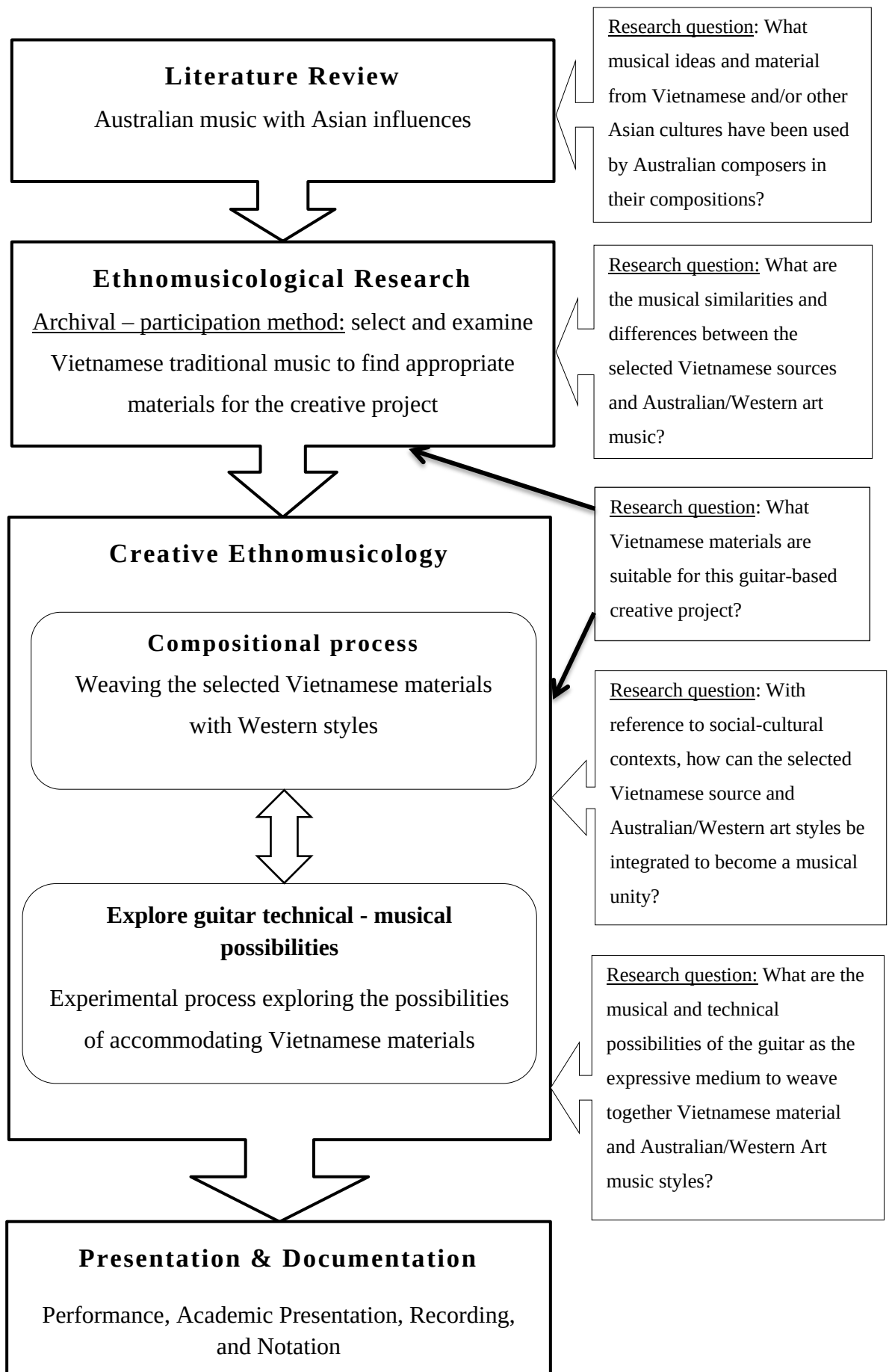
The research questions are:

1. What musical ideas and materials from Vietnamese (if any) and other Asian cultures have been used by Australian composers in their compositions?
2. What are the musical similarities and differences between the selected Vietnamese sources and the Australian/Western art music?
3. What Vietnamese materials are suitable for this guitar-based creative project?
4. With reference to social-cultural contexts, how can the selected Vietnamese musical sources and Australian/Western art styles be integrated to become a musical unity?
5. What are the musical and technical possibilities of the guitar as the expressive medium to weave together Vietnamese materials and Australian/Western art music styles?

RESEARCH METHOD

The research questions set the framework for the research strategy and phases. There are four main phases in the research method which closely correlate to the research questions. A summary of the phases and their relation to the research questions is provided in the diagram in figure 1.

Figure 1: Diagram of Research Method



Literature review

The research is a survey of Australian music with Asian influences from the nineteenth century to the present. The first objective is to search for any existing Australian compositions with Vietnamese influences and to identify what Vietnamese material has been used. The survey also covers Australian compositions with material and inspiration from other Asian countries. The main purpose of the literature review is to contextualise my thesis within the trend of music with Asian influences in Australia. It is not an analytical study to define the characteristics of Australian music. In this phase, I have collected resources from Australian archives and libraries including the Australian Music Centre, National Library of Australia, and various Australian university libraries. Research resources include recordings, journals, books, theses and online materials.

During the research process, there has been an awareness of issues on Australian composers with a European background towards music of the ‘others’. Australia is not alone as the Western conception of ‘exoticism’ has existed in Europe and America for a long time. As Timothy Taylor points out, it “tends to cover up, gloss over, the varieties of treatments of otherness in the last few hundred years” (Taylor 2007, 9). Australian indigenous music was not an exception, for example Covell observed an aspect of this problem which also presented itself on the other side of the Pacific:

There are no obvious reasons why Australian musicians of exclusively European training and background should attempt to synthesize Aboriginal musical idioms and their own in a new way. After all, the imitation and simulation of North American Indian musical traditions by North American composers of European racial origin have been of very little consequence in the musical history of that continent so far (Covell 1967, 87).

Even though it is not within the scope of this thesis, I am aware of the issues and also acknowledge that there is a literature which has attempted to deconstruct the concept of Western ‘exoticism’ beyond the boundary of ethnomusicology and musicology (Taylor 2007, 1-11). Rather, the literature review is an assertion to situate my creative project in a contemporary Australian context, “a society more deliberately embracing its pluralistic culture” (Fabian, Dorottya & Napier, John 2018, 21).

Ethnomusicological research on Vietnamese traditional music

The main purpose of the ethnomusicological research is to find appropriate material for this creative project. The second chapter of this thesis records the research inquiry into Vietnamese traditional music. The process to select appropriate Vietnamese material has required both archival research and the performance – participation method. Primary sources include archival material in both Vietnamese and French. Performance – participation research has taken place in Vietnam, Shanghai and Australia.

From the 1800s to 1954 Vietnam was a French colony (Anderson 2011, 18-26); there are ample sources of material in French archives on Vietnamese culture and traditional music. Between December 2011 and July 2013, I made field trips to archives and institutions in France and Vietnam. French sources were collected at the National Library of France, École Française d'Extrême-Orient, and the Guimet Museum in July 2012. Vietnamese sources were collected at the Vietnam Institute of Culture and Arts Studies, Vietnamese Institute for Musicology and Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music during January 2012 and July 2013.

My archival research activities have concentrated on both vocal and instrumental genres and their historical, social, spiritual and philosophical contexts. Material collected include books, theses, academic writings; music scores; transcriptions; audio and video recordings; and documentary films. I was also able to collect appropriate material from

Australian and international libraries (through the inter-library loans of the Australian National University Library) and online resources. Just in time, the revolutionary digital e-library has opened up unprecedented opportunities; I have been able to discover exciting ground-breaking material on Vietnamese traditional music in the late nineteenth century to the 1930s.

According to Ruth Stone, the participant – observation method is “an approach to research involving varying degrees of observation and participation in a cultural setting” (Stone 2008, 12). In my creative project, participant – observation is a vital part of the research process which has helped bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge from archival research and real performance practice. It has also provided an opportunity to acknowledge and evaluate the changes and development of Vietnamese traditional music as it happens today.

In addition to participation by attending numerous cultural activities and events featuring Vietnamese music, I have performed with local traditional musicians, including an opportunity of directing an orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music in 2012. More details on those performances are provided in the appendices. I was also involved in the organisation of Vietnamese performances at the 2013 World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music in Shanghai, and the World Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music in Sydney in 2015.

Creative Ethnomusicology: compositions with Vietnamese cultural influences

The essence of my thesis is the transformation or metamorphosis of ethnomusicological research into compositions for guitar. Fundamentally, my creative project follows the conceptual framework of ‘Creative Ethnomusicology’, a new theory put forward by the Nigerian composer and musicologist Akin Euba (further details on creative ethnomusicology will be discussed later in the next section). The third chapter will

document the experimental research methods; and how ethnomusicological findings combined with a model of creative ethnomusicology have informed decision making in the compositional process to weave Vietnamese traditional music with Western art music styles.

This phase has required academic research on guitar techniques and guitar compositional styles.¹ The third chapter will also document how creative outcomes have been constantly refined, and at times changed, as a result of new ethnomusicological, technical and compositional findings. The creative process in the selected contrasting compositions will be discussed demonstrating the use of Vietnamese materials, compositional strategies and experimental challenges, and subsequent solutions. In this process, reflection on the collaboration with Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music will illustrate how live performance with Vietnamese traditional musicians can clarify theoretical knowledge from archival research, which led to new musical understanding and consequently changes in the final creative outcomes.

Throughout this creative project, I have conducted research on many other genres of Vietnamese music and also attempted to incorporate that material into my compositions. However, within the scope of the thesis I will focus on three different genres of Vietnamese traditional music which reflect the vocal and instrumental characteristics of the main Vietnamese culture, including its minority groups. The chosen genres are folksongs from various regions of Vietnam with an emphasis on the ‘Lý’ repertoire; the Gong music culture of the Vietnamese central highlands which was included on the

¹ As a concert guitarist, AMEB guitar teacher and high school teacher, I already have an extensive knowledge of guitar repertoire including classical, contemporary and popular music, rock, heavy-metal, punk, and many more.

World Intangible Heritage List in 2005; and the Art of Đờn ca Tài tử music of Southern Vietnam which was included on the World Intangible Heritage List during this project in 2013.

Presentation and Documentation

An important aspect of this creative project has been to consider how best to document the creative works. Music is sound; words and musical scores alone are not enough to reflect the characteristics and sonorities of sound phenomenon. For this thesis, different forms of documentation have been used to demonstrate the many facets of the creative works. The appendices will provide selected documents submitted for this project, including music notation; live and studio sound recordings; public performances and lectures; conference papers and lecture-recitals; a chapter on the new guitar technique ‘staccato-harmonic duotone’; and a full paper on Tài tử music presented at the 2013 World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music in Shanghai.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

I was introduced to Euba’s ‘Creative Ethnomusicology’ theory by Professor Anne Boyd during our very first meeting at the University of Sydney in 2012. She had met with Akin Euba in 2003 and was “profoundly interested” in creative ethnomusicology, which she viewed as “a way forward on the reconciliation of cultural differences between Western and non-Western ways of thinking” (Boyd 2005). Professor Boyd also pointed out to me that the prominent Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe is an exemplary practitioner of creative ethnomusicology.

Euba gave his lecture ‘Creative Ethnomusicology: A Transformation Zone between Research and Composition’ at the University of Pittsburgh in 2000. Later, he realised that “ethno” was “abundant” and changed the term to “creative musicology” (Euba

2014, 4-5). For this thesis, I have decided to retain the term ‘creative ethnomusicology’ as I have only been aware of the new term since late 2016.

Euba believes that creative ethnomusicology could have existed for centuries.² In his recent book, he defined creative ethnomusicology as: “the practice of composers who do research (usually into oral traditional musics) and use the results of the research to compose specific works, or use them to devise their creative idioms” (Euba 2014, 11). This new conceptual framework reflects the practice of many composers of the global age and of the very nature of my thesis: to undertake research into Vietnamese traditional music and to use the results in the search for new creative idioms in the composition of new guitar repertoire.

Creative ethnomusicology is closely related to the theory of ‘Intercultural Music’ which emerged in the last decades of the twentieth century. Euba himself was a strong advocate of intercultural music, and was heavily involved in the first international symposium ‘New Intercultural Music’ that took place in London in 1990 with thirty five composers, scholars and performers from various parts of the world. At this symposium, intercultural music was formally defined:

As a result of factors such as the changing political landscape, historical events, and technological advances affecting human society in the last few decades, there has been tremendous increase in intercultural activity throughout the world...Intercultural music is that in which elements from two or more cultures are integrated. The composer of this music usually belongs to one of the cultures from

² Euba discussed many composers who could be classified as creative ethnomusicologists. Below are a few examples:

- Isaac Albeniz, Enrique Granados, Manuel De Falla, Emmanuel Chabrier, Maurice Ravel, Bizet, Claude Debussy: compositions based on Spanish music
- Hector Villa-Lobos, Paul Chagas: compositions with elements from Indian and Afro-Brazilian folk music (Euba 2014, 13-41)

which the elements have derived but this does not necessarily have to be the case. Indeed, this type of cultural activity is thematic, being inherent in the music itself, and, therefore, the origin of the composer is irrelevant to the definition (Kimberlin 1995, 2).

The main difference between the theories of intercultural music and creative ethnomusicology is that creative ethnomusicology draws upon ethnomusicological research in the process of composition. Euba points out that even though both intercultural composers and creative ethnomusicologists combine materials from other cultures to compose; intercultural composers do not necessarily undertake substantial research. On the contrary, creative ethnomusicologists begin and continue the compositional process with ethnomusicological research, which normally includes field work, and then use the results as the basis for their compositions (Euba 2014, 7).

Euba explains that creative ethnomusicology involves a process of transforming the analysis of ethnomusicological research into a creative synthesis. He adds that this “transformational zone” is probably also a source of inspiration in the compositional process. He writes:

Creative musicology is the process of moving from analysis (being a critical dissection of the parts that make up the whole and the rationalization of how the parts fit into the whole) to synthesis (being an artistic recombination of parts, with a view to replicating the object analysed or creating a variation or metamorphosis of it) (Euba 2014, 5).

This practice builds a bridge between Ethnomusicology and Composition, which are usually two different fields in music. This ‘bridging’ nurtures the development of a unique compositional style and also exciting ethnomusicological outcomes. In my thesis, “the process of moving from analysis to synthesis” from Vietnamese traditional

music into guitar composition has been the main source of inspiration and informed knowledge in the compositional process which contributes to the final outcomes and finding of new creative idioms.

As well as ‘creative ethnomusicology’, I have also examined the theory of ‘practice-based’ research and realised that it has different perspectives which are inappropriate to the nature of my thesis. In Australia, the ‘practice-based’ trend has emerged as a new paradigm in research during the last decade of the twentieth century (Haseman 2006). Carole Gray, a pioneer and author frequently cited in this field, defines the theory in two principles:

Firstly, research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the need of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners (Gray 1996, 3)

Also in the context of my thesis, the application of ‘creative ethnomusicology’ has facilitated the identification of the problems, research questions, literature review, research methods and outcomes from the early stages; while on the contrary, the development of research methodology has been the “central problem” in practice-based theory:

...the problem, or many problems, emerge over time according to the needs of practice and practitioners’s evolving purposes. Practice-led researchers therefore have consistently argued that their need to delay identifying the research question is both defensible and necessary... the practice-led researcher may find problem definition is unstable for as long as practice is ongoing and it is only when the

practice is done, and possibly in the final phases of candidature, that the final research problem will be decided (Haseman, Bradley & Mafe, Daniel 2009, 214).

It is also important to elaborate that in the context of my creative project; the theoretical foundation of ‘creative ethnomusicology’ is principally applied and limited to the research methodology and creative process only. There are complex issues in Euba’s theory, in terms of degrees of appropriation (Agawu 2016, 318-334), ownership (Euba 2014, 37-41), and musical imperialism (Nnamani 2010, 4), which are acknowledged here even though they are not within the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, the discussion between ‘creative ethnomusicology’ and ‘intercultural music’ aims to highlight that my creative works are rooted in the ethnomusicological findings from fieldwork; and also emphasises the main difference between this project and other Australian composers who do not conduct ethnomusicological research.

Within the concept of creative ethnomusicology, my research demonstrates a global perspective in which an Australian musician, born elsewhere, incorporates a recent African theory to guide his research into an Asian music tradition and uses Western techniques to compose new works. Based on the theoretical foundation of creative ethnomusicology, the process of transforming Vietnamese ethnomusicological research into contemporary composition has fostered the emergence of a new voice in the Australasian-Pacific region.

CREATIVE METHOD

My creative project is one of the first Australian attempts to apply the theoretical principles of creative ethnomusicology to composition. In undertaking the project, there were several field trips to collect primary material from archival sources as well as field trips to observe and participate in performances with Vietnamese traditional musicians. Research results from selected Vietnamese musical genres were then used as a source of

inspiration and materials for composition as well as scholarly ethnomusicological output.

My creative method is partially based on the heritage of Béla Bartók, who is considered an exemplary model for creative ethnomusicology. Euba states: “the most important model for creative musicology has been provided by Bartók, who is not only famous as a composer but is also acknowledged as one of the founders of ethnomusicology” (Euba 2014, 27). Bartók’s method of how to use ethnomusicological research to compose has played a significant role in the development of this project and the search for my own musical identity by using Vietnamese traditional music in modern composition.

As a scholar, Bartók’s contribution to the field of ethnomusicology is significant with more than nine thousand folk melodies collected in the period from 1905 to 1918.³ As a composer, he is considered one of the most important composers of the twentieth century. Together with many other composers at the end of the nineteenth century, Bartok was eager to escape the late Romanticism era of music by searching for new creative idioms. He found his voice through a new source of inspiration, that of traditional music which he called “the ideal starting point for a musical renaissance; and a composer in search of new ways cannot be led by a better master” (Moreux 1953, 238).

Very much like the young Bartók a century earlier, I have looked for my own creative idioms through the beauty of traditional music. Like him, I am excited by how “these melodies are a classic example of how to express perfectly a musical idea with the simplest means and in the most concise form.” (Bartók 1977, 159). Also, very much

³ According to Benjamin Suchoff this collection included 2,700 folksongs from Hungary; 3,400 from Romania; 3,000 from Slovakia; and about 250 from Bulgaria and Serbia (Bartók 1977, ix).

like Bartók, I have experienced and acknowledged the misinterpretations, the difficulties and the challenges in the process of using traditional music for composition. Bartók wrote about his experience:

Many people think it a comparatively easy task to write a composition round folk-tunes – a less achievement at least than a composition on original themes – because, they think, the composer is dispensed of part of the work: invention of themes. This way of thought is completely erroneous. To handle folk-tune is one of the most difficult tasks; equally difficult if not more so than to write a major original composition (Moreux 1953, 244).

Even though it is a century old, I have found Bartók's comments very relevant in this creative project. From the compositional perspective, Bartók provided three main principles of how to use ethnomusicological material for composition. Most of my creative works based on Vietnamese traditional music have applied his principles as a point of reference.

Bartók's first principle is “a melody unchanged or slightly changed, write an accompaniment part, possibly some opening and concluding phrases” (Moreux 1953, 239). This model applies to the structure of most of my compositions with influences from Vietnamese folk songs, in which each complete original folk song is usually preserved at the beginning followed by its variations. The “opening and concluding phrases” and also the bridging phrases in my creative works are either newly-composed or based on the material of the original folk song. In writing the accompaniment part for folk songs, I have taken Bartók's advice on the difficulty:

If we keep in mind that borrowing a tune means being bound by its individual peculiarity we shall understand one part of the difficulty. Another is created by the

special character of a folk-tune. We must penetrate into it, feel it, and bring it out in sharp contours by the appropriate setting (Moreux 1953, 244).

Bartók's second and third principles have been the creative reference for my compositions with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture. In these compositions, Gong culture's idioms, characteristics and method of music making acquired from ethnomusicological research are transformed into new works without authentic Gong melodies. This compositional process represents the key theoretical foundation of creative ethnomusicology. Bartók summaries the two principles as follows:

The composer does not make use of a real peasant melody but invents his own imitation of such melodies" (Moreux 1953, 242).

Neither peasant melody nor imitation of peasant melody can be found in his music, but it is pervaded by the atmosphere of folk music: completely absorbs the idiom of peasant music which has become his mother-tongue (Moreux 1953, 243).

Straddling both Euba's theory and Bartók's model, my creative method is an approach that integrates research, composition and performance. The research component comprises findings on Vietnamese social-musical material as the source of inspiration and reference. The compositional component is the "transformation" of Vietnamese material to composition. This transformational process involves compositional strategies and experimental application on the guitar to explore the possibilities of creating musical unity between Vietnamese materials and Western art music styles. The performance component is a form of presentation and evaluation of the final outcomes; more importantly it helps to indicate the relevance of the creative works for both a Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese audience.

Each component is a vitally inseparable element of the other components, which continuously contributes to the development and final creative outcomes. For instance, new research outcomes can affect the compositional strategies and practical explorations and therefore performance as well. Meanwhile, the compositional tasks constantly relate to and cross-reference with the research results for cultural authenticity and inspiration. Performance also draws inspiration from research, and simultaneously informs ways to improve compositional outcomes. Collaborative performances with international musicians have had an impact on compositional and research outcomes.

In a theoretical context, my creative method brings an additional performance dimension to Euba's theory of creative ethnomusicology "the application of ethnomusicology to composition". It is a holistic approach that combines the three areas of music: research, composition and performance. From a practical perspective, my creative method is likely to be the first implement of Bartók's conceptual framework to use ethnomusicological research in composition in the context of the Australasian-Pacific region.

ORIGINALITY AND SIGNIFICANCE

At the national level, my compositions for this creative project will be the first comprehensive collection of Australian guitar music with Vietnamese cultural influences. The empirical research findings on how Vietnamese musical material and social contexts are used in the compositional process are the first of their kind in Australia. The exploration of new tuning systems and new guitar techniques to accommodate compositional strategies has generated unique creative outcomes. The use of an innovative technique 'staccato-harmonic duotone' in the compositions to produce two distinctive pitches on one guitar string is the first of its kind.

As ethnomusicological research from selected Vietnamese musical genres are used as a source of inspiration for compositions and as scholarly ethnomusicological outputs, the study of primary sources in Vietnamese and French has made contributions to the knowledge of Vietnamese traditional music within the English-speaking academic community. New evidence from the French sources has shed new lights on the development of Southern Vietnamese music in both the English and Vietnamese academic communities.

From a practical viewpoint, the results of this research will directly enrich the Australian repertoire for solo guitar through a unique confluence of Vietnamese and Western musical styles. This could generate further interest in composition using Vietnamese music as a new source of inspiration. The outcomes will also provide educators with a means by which they can use the new works as a teaching resource to promote meaningful interdisciplinary work in the arts.

In the context of the Asia-Pacific region, this study is an original contribution to the knowledge of intercultural musical exchange between Vietnamese traditional music and contemporary Australian musical practice, reflecting the identity and voice of a new generation of Australian-Vietnamese composers. From a theoretical perspective, the application of creative ethnomusicology implementing Bartók's conceptual framework to transform Vietnamese ethnomusicological research into guitar composition is likely to be the first of its kind.

CHAPTER 1:

AUSTRALIAN MUSIC WITH

ASIAN INFLUENCES

Since the birth of the Nation to the end of the nineteenth century, Australian art music has been mainly influenced by English and European musical cultures. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was some interest in Asian music among Australian composers. Perhaps the earliest record of this is from Percy Grainger (1882 – 1961) who asked his teacher about the prize of a Mendelsohn Piano competition: “If I should win, would they let me study Chinese music with the money?” (Balough 1982, 78). Since the 1930s, Australian art music has been enriched with many compositions inspired by musical material from Asian countries. The critic Wilfrids Mellers even declared that “Australia’s future must lie with an acceptance of Asia and a partial rejection of Europe, or at least the moribund British tradition” (Boyd 2005). This chapter will present a literature review of the musical trend with Asian influences in Australia. The purpose of this review is to search for any existing Australian compositions with inspiration from Vietnamese and other Asian cultures to contextualise my thesis within the trend of music with Asian influences in Australia. As stated earlier in the Introduction, it does not intend to be an analytical study nor attempt to define the characteristics of Australian music. With reference to social and historical contexts, this chapter will identify and illustrate Asian musical material and idioms used by leading Australian composers in selected compositions from the 1930s to the present day.

1.1 Chinese influences

The Chinese community has been an important element in the formation of Australian society. From the nineteenth century to the present day, Australia has seen the influx of many Chinese immigrants. The statistics for 1861 showed that the Chinese community was the third largest group of immigrants (38,742) after English (630,107) and European immigrants (40,942). However, from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s,

almost all musical activity by Chinese immigrants was limited to their own community, mostly due to the White Australia Policy which required immigrants to identify with the Australian culture (Wee 2011).

The early decades of the twentieth century saw Chinese – Australian generations having more opportunity to share their music with Australian society. The influential Australian composer, Peter Sculthorpe (1929 – 2014), recalled that his first encounter with live music was actually a Chinese performance at a weekend market in Tasmania, during this period. By the mid-1930s, *Beautiful Fresh Flower* by Percy Grainger emerged as one of the first compositions with Chinese influences in Australian music. His solo piano work is an arrangement of the Chinese folk song *Jasmine Flower*.⁴

Tone colours of Chinese traditional musical instruments have since attracted other Australian composers. Nigel Westlake expressed this interest in *Roads to Xanadu*, in which many Chinese instruments are blended together with Western musical ensembles. In the same way, George Dreyfus composed *New Gold Mountain, a piece for Chinese traditional instrumental ensemble* (1993) featuring Chinese flute, sheng, yangqin, and zither. The work uses Chinese pentatonic scales interweaved with Western tonal harmonies.

Born in China from Russian-Jewish parents, the prominent composer Larry Sitsky (1934), often mentions his exposure to Chinese music when he was young, particularly the gongs and Chinese stringed instruments. However, Sitsky does not seek to reproduce the sounds of Chinese music, but rather to express memories of these sounds in his compositions. His impression of the Chinese Opera with noisy drums, bells and cymbals, was reflected in the discordant chords on the piano to accompany the voice in *Lady of Hsi-Tsang* (Sitsky 2011).

⁴ This famous Chinese folksong has been used by other Western composers. Puccini used it in the opera *Turandot*. The Russian composer Anton Arensky also made a piano arrangement based on this folksong.

Along with the interest in Chinese traditional music, Chinese literature and philosophy have also been a source of inspiration for Australian compositions. One of the first generation of Australian female composers, Betty Beath, used the English translation of Chinese poems of the tenth century for her song cycle *Poems from the Chinese*. Written for mezzo-soprano, clarinet, percussion, piano and cello, her work combines Chinese harmonies (fourth and fifth intervals) with Western chromatic scales. The ancient concepts of Chinese philosophy were explored by the composer Larry Sitsky in his third Violin Concerto *I Ching* (Book of Changes), in which the basic Chinese Eight Trigrams are used “as the poetic impulse for the eight movements of the concerto” (Sitsky 2006).

Australian composers with Chinese backgrounds have also contributed to the trend of Chinese influences in Australian music. A composer with a Chinese-Malaysian background, Liza Lim, combined Cantonese ritual street opera with contemporary musical theatre in her *Moon spirit feasting*; an opera based on a Chinese legend in seven parts, which won the first prize for composition by the Australian Music Centre in 2002. Julian Yu was born in China and taught Composition at the Beijing Conservatory of Music until he migrated to Australia in 1985. His *Willow and Wattle* crystallised elements of Chinese traditional music and tone colours together with the Australian national anthem theme of *Advance Australia Fair*. The excerpt from bars 239 to 244 shows that the clarinet plays the melody of *Advance Australia Fair* in E flat major, while the ‘jinghu’ plays an elaborated version in parallel (figure 2) (Wee 2011).

Figure 2: *Advance Australia Fair* (Wee 2011)



The twenty-first century has seen Australian composers continuing to explore various aspects of Chinese musical culture in their work. Larry Sitsky's new song cycle, *A Feast of Lanterns* (2013), is based on Chinese poetry. Andrián Pertout explores the Chinese theory of the Five Elements, with his *Elementa Quinque*. Bruce Crossman is inspired by the 'Qi' philosophy and the opera tradition of 'Kunqu'. Diana Blom takes inspiration in contemporary Chinese art and melodic ideas for her new works. Inspiration from other Chinese influences such as landscapes, social tradition and religious belief, have also been used in compositions by Michael Hannan, Lisa Lim, Maria Grenfell and Tony Wheeler.

1.2 Indonesian influences

Indonesia is Australia's closest Asian neighbour. This geographical location has inspired strong interest in Balinese and Javanese music among Australian composers. In Europe, interest in Indonesian music started back in the nineteenth century. Debussy brought his experience of a gamelan performance at the 1889 Paris World Exposition and used it in some of his compositions. In the 1930s, the first fieldwork research on Balinese music was done by the Canadian composer and musicologist, Colin McPhee; while in Australia, the composer Percy Grainger began to use Balinese and Javanese music in his compositions. His transcription *Sekar gadung*, for Western ensemble of tuned percussion, piccolos and voices (1931); and his composition, *Berong Pengètjèt*, for Balinese gamelan angklung, are the earliest Australian works with Indonesian influences (M. Cooke 1998, 18).

Grainger's passion for Asian music was passed on to the nine-year old Peter Sculthorpe. In their meeting, Grainger advised the young Sculthorpe to "look North to the islands" as a source of inspiration (Sculthorpe 1999, 275). The effectiveness of this advice began to emerge in Sculthorpe's orchestral works of the 1960s, which used inspiration

from the Indonesian islands. Sculthorpe's *Sun Music II* (1966) is inspired by 'Ketjak', a form of Balinese dance and music drama; while *Sun Music III* draws its material from the music of 'Gender Wayang' from Balinese shadow puppet theatre (Boyd 2005). Sculthorpe's orchestral works with Indonesian influences have become a signature of his contribution to Australian music. A contemporary of Sculthorpe, Richard Meale also looked for inspirations in Asian music. In 1960 he went to America on a Ford Foundation grant, studying Asian music at the University of California. Meale completed *Nocturnes*, an orchestral piece of six movements, which was indebted to the gamelan idioms of Balinese music (Donald 1966 – 1967, 3).

The study of Indonesian and other Asian music was included in Ethnomusicology at the University of Sydney from the 1960s. The two leading Australian composers Ross Edwards and Anne Boyd studied with Sculthorpe in this period. Anne Boyd (born 1946) recalls how her strong interest in Asian music began during her study:

Peter was our ethnomusicology teacher and was passionate about Japanese and gamelan...our way of studying ethnomusicology was to listen to whatever records we could get hold of, and to read any books that came out. So the Colin MacPhee book on Balinese Music that came around that time was a huge influence on me; I just devoured it (Grenfell 2003).

Anne Boyd applied ethnomusicological study to most of her compositions and found her unique voice in the Asian ethos. Written for flute and piano, her *Bali Moods* work is the transformation of gamelan music principles into Western composition. Balinese musical texture and structure with specific pitch and rhythmic elements are incorporated in these works (Grenfell 2003, 112). The excerpt below from *Bali Mood No. 1* (figure 3) illustrates her use of the 'pelog' scale and rhythmic ideas from gamelan music. In a similar creative style, Ross Edwards' *Piano Sonata* (2011), combines Baroque structure

and texture idioms with an Eastern pentatonic flavour and Indonesian ‘pelog nem’ scale. He saw this method as a way to link the Western and South East Asian cultures: “textures recalling the playful Bach of the Two - Part Inventions are immediately established: Western polyphony here supplants South East Asian heterophony but a common musical purport creates a link between the cultures” (Edwards 2011).

Figure 3: *Bali Mood No. 1* (Boyd, Bali Moods 1987)



The last decades of the twentieth century to the present day have seen Australian composers continuing to explore various aspects of Indonesian culture. Betty Beath’s orchestral tone poem *Asmaradana* is based on Javanese song form by the influential Javanese writer and poet Goenawan Mohamad. Inspired by Indonesian history, the Chilean-Australian composer Andrián Pertout’s *Passage to Klungkung* for two percussionists is homage to the Balinese lost kingdom which was invaded by the Dutch in 1908 (Pertout 1999). Exotic combinations of Western and Indonesian instruments have also been explored in recent works by the younger generation of Australian composers such as Brigid Burke, Sophie Lacaze and John Peterson.

1.3 Japanese influences

Japanese culture has received significant interest in Australian music since the 1960s. The positive musical interchange between Japanese and Australian musical cultures has

flourished in many compositions of Australian art music by Peter Sculthorpe, Richard Meale, Anne Boyd, and Barry Conyngham, and continues to be a strong inspiration for the more recent generation of Australian composers. Starting in the 1960s, the aesthetics of Japanese theatre music emerged in Australian compositions. Richard Meale incorporated aspects of the traditional Kabuki drama and its “suppressed, constricted violent” Nagauta instrumental techniques in his orchestral work *Images* (Covell 1967, 220-221). Paul Griffiths sees Meale's music as a ‘suffusion’ of two traditions between the “coherent western development of Boulez and Webern; and the cool stillness of East Asian art” (Griffiths 1975, 354). Maintaining a lifelong passion for Japanese music, Peter Sculthorpe’s early orchestral works included many elements of Japanese theatre music. His *Sun Music*s works painted an exotic confluence between Western music with the theatrical Noh and traditional Japanese court music. Anne Boyd wrote about the Japanese aesthetics manifested in his work:

...the wailing string glissandi in *Sun Music I* and *IV* which sound so much like the drum calls in Japanese *Noh*. Further, the time sense in this music is decidedly unlike that found in Western forms. It has much more in common with the cycles of gamelan composition, or the immensely slow, dream-like passage of time and austerity of Japanese *Noh*... Sculthorpe’s musical forms, like those of Bali and Japan, can be thought of as non-developmental, but contrast and duality remain prominent Western characteristics (Boyd 2005).

Ross Edwards (born 1944) explored the non-developmental character of Asian music in his orchestral piece *Mountain Village in a Clearing Mist* (1973). As Michael Hannan points out, there could be some possible influences from an orchestral work of the Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu in Edwards’ work. Paul Hope states that “*Mountain Village*, with its absence of harmonic goals or climaxes, lack of a sense of

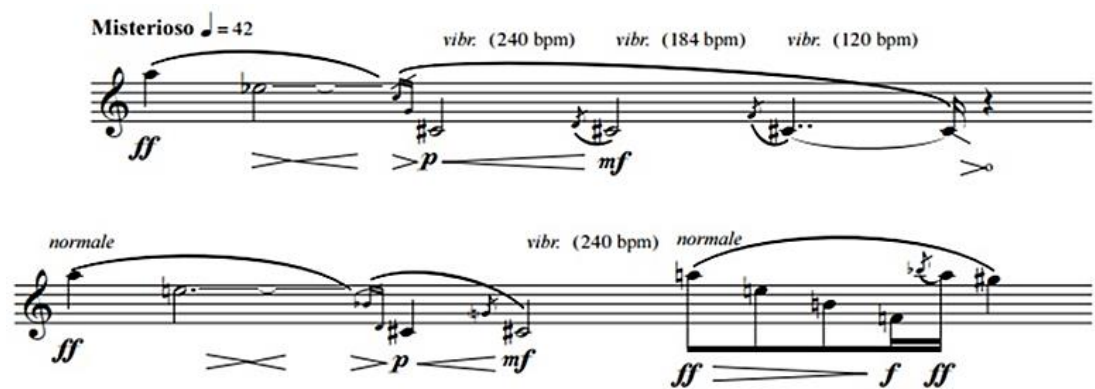
development as normally occurs in the European tradition, and emphasis on timbre is, moreover, close to an Eastern conception of music” (Stanhope 1994).

The early 1970s showed the growing interest in Japanese music among a new generation of Australian composers. Barry Conyngham went to Tokyo to study with Takemitsu. The Eastern concepts of ‘orchestral space’ as a relationship between pitch, register and texture were explored in Conyngham’s work *Ice Carving* (1970). Interestingly, in approaching Asian music, Conyngham has found an angle of Australian art music:

...for me, the sense of isolation and disconnect that I saw as a possible expression of what it was to be Australian: people living in a huge continent 'occupied' in the name of another country - insecure, uncertain, fond of nostalgia, sentiment and (oddly enough) displays of self-satisfaction (Heino 2014).

Colour and expressive techniques of Japanese traditional musical instruments have attracted many Australian composers. Anne Boyd enriched Australian flute repertoire with the Japanese shakuhachi tone colour and instrumental idioms in her works *Gold Fish through Summer Rain* (1978) and *Red Sun Chill Wind* (1980). The TaikOz Drum Group emerged in the late twentieth century with Japanese and Australian performers having many compositions for both Western and Japanese instruments. The 1990s saw a new generation of composers who could play Asian instruments such as Riley Lee and Michael Hannan. Lee was the first Australian to achieve the title Grand Master of Shakuhachi. Hannan’s *In Utter Darkness* for solo flute reflects the Zen of musical concepts, the Honkyoku shakuhachi tradition, which emerged in the thirteenth century by the komusô monks (figure 4).

Figure 4: *In Utter Darkness* (Wirripang 1987)



Larger combinations of Western orchestral and Japanese traditional instruments can be seen in the symphonic work, *Books of Clouds*, by the composer Gerard Brophy. The work is for shakuhachi soloist, four Japanese percussionists, two percussion soloists and orchestra. The critic Suzanne Yanko noted the well-received first performance of this work in 2008: “From the moment the strings picked up the low sound and introduced the first subject it was evident that this was music that surpassed traditional definition: with ‘Asian’ overtones, but grounded in a European symphonic tradition. It worked.” (Yanko 2008).

1.4 Influences from other Asian countries

Alongside the significant interests in the musics of China, Indonesia and Japan, there are also limited Australian compositions with influences from other Asian countries. This section will illustrate selected compositions with influences from India, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Korea.

The first Australian composition with Indian influences was the opera, *The Transposed Heads* by the Australian female composer Peggy Glanville-Hicks (1912-1990). Even though she spent most of her life abroad and became an American citizen, her music is still considered ‘Australian’ (Covell 1970). Her work *The Transposed Head* contains

traditional raga pitch materials, tala rhythmic features, and tone colours of Indian traditional musical instruments (Glanville-Hicks 1953). Interest in Filipino traditional music began to emerge in the early twenty-first century in Australia. Bruce Crossman was a pioneer of this style of music. His *Rituals for Soprano* and *Daragang Magayon Cantata* (for voice and piano) are influenced by the bossed gong sounds and the sonorities of Filipino Kulingtan music. He described how Asian materials are combined with Western principles in his works:

This mix reverberates through my earlier work into later material via interval-color and timbre sonorities, Pacific-especially Filipino-"musical objects" and conceptual influences from Asia (living color, accelerating cathartic climax) within a European-trained structural sense (macrocosmic design, increasing and lengthening ratios) (Crossman 2002, 63).

Written by Helen Gifford in 1970, *Of Old Angkor* for French horn and marimba is the only Australian composition with Cambodian influences. This composition features Asian gongs and the Cambodian traditional instrument 'Sneng' (Gifford 1970). Korean traditional music has also been a source of inspiration in Australian music since the 1990s. Michael Whitticker's *In Prison Air* (1998) is influenced by 'Kasa', a Korean narrative song form and a solo instrumental form Sanjo. This composition "makes much use of repeated melodic figures, falsetto tones, trills, vibrato, microtonal ornamentation and glissandi" from Korean traditional music (Whitticker 1998).

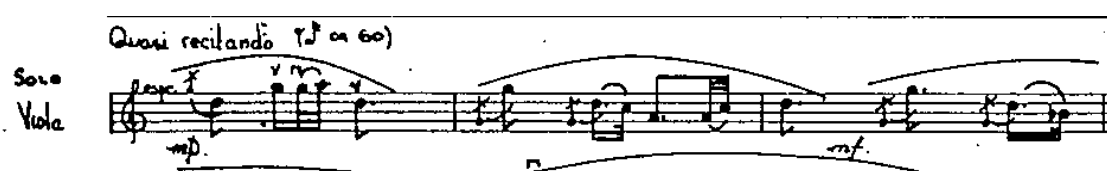
1.5 Vietnamese influences

To most Australians, awareness of the Vietnamese people has been mainly through the Vietnam War and the settlement of the Vietnamese refugees in Australia after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Even though the Vietnamese community has now become strongly established in Australia, Vietnamese music has been mainly performed within its own

community with little connection with the wider Australian community. At the inaugural 2015 World Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music in Sydney, the composer Diana Blom remarked that for forty years she did not know that Vietnamese traditional music actually existed in Australia. In his general survey of Vietnamese music in Australia, Le Tuan Hung has warned that even the younger Australian Vietnamese generation has lost interest in Vietnamese traditional music (T. H. Lê 2011).

Australian composers have had limited interest in Vietnamese traditional music even though it was taught together with other Asian music in the 1960s at the University of Sydney. My research has identified that Anne Boyd was the first Australian composer to use Vietnamese materials in her compositions. Her *String Quartet Number 1* is the first composition with Vietnamese influences in Australian art music. The composition begins with a melody of the Vietnamese traditional music *Tứ Đại Oán* (figure 5).

Figure 5: *Tứ Đại Oán* used in Boyd’s *String Quartet No 1* (Boyd 1971)



Tokita wrote about its context and how it was received by her teachers:

Tu Dai Oan (1968; published 1973) was the most significant work of the early Sydney period. Active in the Vietnam moratorium movement, Boyd composed her first string quartet in 1968 based on this Vietnamese folksong. Commissioned by the Vietnam Arts Festival in Sydney (Le Page 43), it received its first performance at an illegal political meeting (AT). It was praised by her teachers Sculthorpe and Meale, and by her mentor James Murdoch because it “sounded like the music of Europe (Tokita 1996, 187).

In 1979, the Vietnamese melody of *Tứ Đại Oán*, once again emerged “which threads its way throughout each of five sections” of Anne Boyd’s new work *My Name is Tian* written for soprano, flute, viola, harp and percussion (figure 6) (Boyd 2000). Based on the novel by Don’o Kim, the composition reflects tragic human destiny in wars. Dedicated to ‘the People of Vietnam’, Anne Boyd writes:

In slow passages, the harmony is frozen these sound like the patterns of falling rain, or rather the dripping after rain has stopped falling. ..But the very lightness of the textures serve as a foil to the intense pain and loneliness by the orphan Tian. The harp patterns... sound pretty enough but listened to in a different way their relentlessness could suggest the pattern not of rain, but of machine guns (Boyd 2000).

Figure 6: *My name is Tian* (Boyd 1979)

The image shows a page from a musical score for the piece 'My Name is Tian' by Anne Boyd. The score is written for five instruments: Soprano (Sopr.), Alto Flute (Alt. fl.), Viola (Via.), Harp (Harp), and Percussion (Perc.). The Soprano part has lyrics: 'courier, And I am the lone hair For my name is Tian For my'. The music is in a slow, lyrical style with various dynamics like *mf* and *f*. A measure number '30' is highlighted in a box. The Harp part features a triplet of eighth notes. The Percussion part also includes a triplet of eighth notes.

It took three decades after *My Name is Tian* to see another Australian composition with Vietnamese influences by the New-Zealand born Australian composer Diana Blom. Her work *The Ca Trù Singer* published in 2010 is inspired by the elements of melodic

and rhythmic material of the Vietnamese ensemble music ‘Ca Trù’. This Vietnamese traditional music genre was included on the World Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2009. The excerpt below shows the low pitch piano chord representing the Vietnamese drum while the right hand uses a wooden beater, representing ‘cái phách’ (a beater) to accompany the melody of the singer performed by the bassoon (Blom 2010).

Figure 7: *The Ca tru Singer* (Blom 2010)

109

109 *f* use both beaters

pick up second beater LRL

112 Con sord.

112

put down second beater *ff* pick up second beater

1.6 Conclusion

My literature survey examines the creative trend of composing art music with Asian influences in Australia. The research has found that since the 1930s, Australian composers have continued to look for new musical ideas and inspiration in the music of other cultures demonstrating significant interest in the music of China, Bali, Java and Japan. There has also been some interest in other countries in the Asia - Pacific region, including Vietnam. With reference to historical and social contexts, this chapter illustrates Asian cultural and musical ideas that inspired leading Australian composers from the twentieth century to the present day.

My research has identified that Anne Boyd's *String Quartet No 1*, composed in 1968, is the first Australian composition with a Vietnamese influence. The Vietnamese melody *Tứ Đại Oán* was used again in Boyd's *My Name is Tian*, for voice and instrumental ensemble in 1979. There was a gap of nearly three decades before the interest in Vietnamese traditional music returned in Diana Blom's *The Ca Trù Singer* for piano and bassoon in 2010.

This literature review has contextualised the position of my creative project within the trend of Australian music with Asian influences. As there is limited interest in Vietnamese music, my project will help to raise awareness of the Vietnamese musical culture in Australia and to advocate for its role in Australasian musical interchanges. Like the Australian composers, Larry Sitsky and Julian Yu, who were born in China but mainly Western trained, and who also used Chinese musical influences in their work, my creative project is a contribution by an Australian composer born in Vietnam, but Australian trained, who uses Vietnamese music as a source of inspiration.

This survey highlights that my creative project will be the first comprehensive collection of Australian music with Vietnamese cultural influences. The compositional process and ethnomusicological research undertaken in this project will provide useful knowledge on Vietnamese traditional music and how to use its material in composition. This endeavour will be a helpful resource for other Australian composers, and also a precedent to encourage the emerging Vietnamese – Australian generation to contribute to Australian music.

CHAPTER 2:

VIETNAMESE

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

For more than half a century, the field of ethnomusicology has been generally defined as the “study of music as culture, or the study of music as human experience” (Stone 2008, ix). Mantle Hood, one of the influential theorists of the twentieth century also stated that it is “a field that has almost as many approaches and objectives as there are practitioners” (Stone 2008, 2). This statement is relevant to my research into Vietnamese traditional music as a creative project. From this perspective, while the main purpose is to look for Vietnamese musical material as a source of inspiration, my ethnomusicological research also examines the historical, cultural, social contexts and possible foreign influences on Vietnamese music to acquire an informed knowledge for the process of composition. Some in-depth observation and comparison of the similarities and differences between Vietnamese and Western music are investigated but this chapter does not intend to be an analytical study or a comprehensive survey of Vietnamese music.

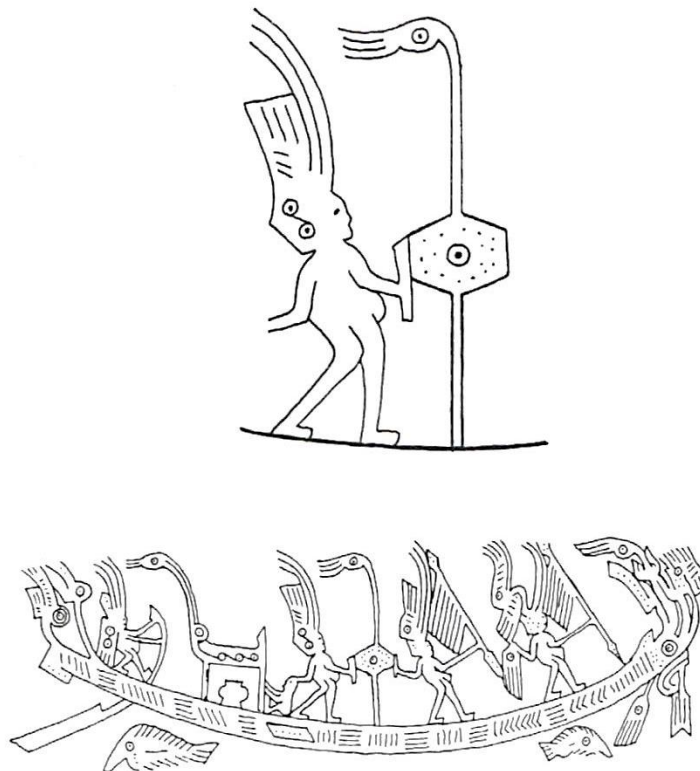
2.1 Vietnamese traditional music overview

It is generally believed by scholars that Vietnamese civilization began earlier or during the Đông Sơn Bronze Age (Cooke, Li and James 2011, 6). In recent years, more Đông Sơn drums have been found in Vietnam that provide more archaeological evidence of Vietnamese cultural identity in this pre-historic period. According to Tô Ngọc Thanh, there are figures of dancers and musicians playing instruments and singing on the ‘Ngọc Lũ’ and ‘Hoàng Hà’ bronze drums discovered in Vietnam (figure 8, 9 and 10). He states that those instruments and some music genres still exist today in some Vietnamese ethnic minority communities (N. T. Tô 1997, 81-8). Pham Duy also notes that bronze drums were still used for tribal ceremonies in the Northern highlands in the 1940s (Pham 1975, 6-7).

Figure 8: Surface of a Đông Sơn bronze drum (N. T. Tô 1997, 83)



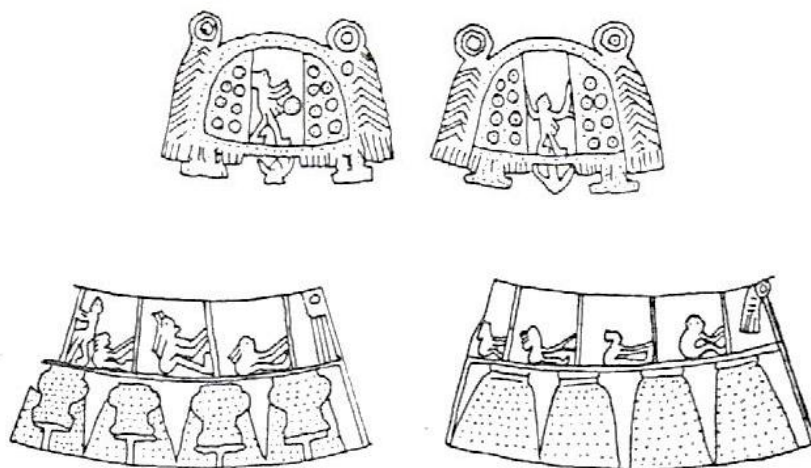
Figure 9: Playing the leather drum (N. T. Tô 1997, 85)



Vietnamese history, culture and traditional music are diverse and complex. There are fifty-four ethnic communities with their own musical cultures. The main group is the Kinh which constitutes over eighty-five percent of the population (Sterling, Hurley and

Le 2006, 1). Throughout its history, Vietnam has encountered many foreign cultures which could have contributed and influenced the development of Vietnamese music.

Figure 10: Playing on the gongs (N. T. Tô 1997, 84)



2.2 Musical identity and influences

Vietnamese musical identity has been documented in scholarly writings since the eleventh century. The earliest, and one of most cited sources is Lê Tắc's *An Nam Chí Lược* (Abbreviated Records of An Nam) published in 1335, which provides the earliest records of Vietnamese musical instruments, repertoire and genres, and details how music was used up to the fourteenth century:

Nhạc-Khí: có thứ trống phạn-si (trống cơm), nguyên nhạc khí của Chiêm-thành, kiểu tròn và dài nghiền cơm, bịt hai đầu, cứ giữa mặt mà vỗ thì kêu tiếng trong mà rõ ràng, hợp với ống kèn, tháp nửa, cái xập xĩa, cái trống lớn, gọi là đại-nhạc, chỉ vua mới được dùng; các tôn thất, quý quan có gặp lễ đám chay đám cưới mới cho dùng đại-nhạc. Còn đàn cầm, đàn tranh, tỳ-bà, đàn thất huyền, đàn song huyền, ống địch, ống sáo, kèn và quyền thì gọi là tiểu nhạc, không kỳ sang hèn, ai cũng dùng được. Các bài khúc như Nam-Thiên-Nhạc, Ngọc-Lâu-Xuân, Đạp-Thanh-Du, Mộng

Du Tiên, Canh-Lậu-Trường, không thể chép hết. Hoặc dùng thơ-ngữ làm thi phú phổ vào âm nhạc, để tiện ca ngâm (T. Lê 1961, 47-48).

Musical instruments: there is the rice drum, originating from Champa, the shape is long and round, smashing rice covered two sides, just clap in the middle, it sounds bright and clear, together with ống kèn (reed instrument), cymbal, large drum, called “great-music”, only the King is allowed to use; the royal families and mandarins on occasions of wedding and funeral ceremonies are allowed to use great-music. Also đàn cầm (Chinese string instrument), đàn tranh (zither), tỳ-bà (pipa), đàn thất huyền (7-string instrument), đàn song huyền (2-string instrument), ống địch (vertical flute), ống sáo (transverse flute), kèn (reed instrument) and quyền (?) called “small-music”, either the nobles or lower class can use. Those pieces such as Nam-Thiên-Nhạc, Ngọc-Lâu-Xuân, Đạp-Thanh-Du, Mộng Du Tiên, Canh-Lậu-Trường, not able to note all. Or using native language makes poetry set to music for reciting-singing.

Through several periods of invasion and colonisation by the Chinese from the tenth century through to the nineteenth century, Vietnam has been influenced by Chinese literature, music, social customs and Confucian thinking. Chinese characters were used for Vietnamese writing and music notation until the early twentieth century. Some Vietnamese musical instruments and genres are related to Chinese music. In the fifteenth century, Vietnamese court music was restructured based on Chinese Ming Dynasty court music (Ngô, *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* 1697) (Đ. H. Phạm 1985). Ngô Sĩ Liên gave a detailed account in his *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* about how the Vietnamese adaptation was different from the Chinese specifications:

In the fifteenth century, King Lê Thái Tổ assigned Lương Đăng and Nguyễn Trãi to adapt the new court music of the Ming Dynasty to Vietnamese court music which included the Eight Timbre (Ba Yin) silk, bamboo, wood, stone, metal, clay, gourd

and skin. The Vietnamese version of the Eight Timbre is different from the Chinese in this period and included: trống treo lớn (large drum); biên khánh (set of 16 metal slabs hung of a rack); biên chung (16 bells hung on a rack); đàn cầm, đàn sắt (string instruments); senh, quản, thược (wind instruments); chúc, ngũ (percussion instruments); huân trì (wind instrument made of clay) (Ngô, Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư 1697, 360-371).

Phạm Đình Hổ also noted in his *Vũ trung tùy bút* that during the fifteenth century, Chinese principles influenced both Vietnamese theory and the practical aspects of instrumental and vocal music:

Năm Hồng Đức nhà Lê ...mới kê cấu âm nhạc Trung Hoa hiệp vào quốc âm ta, đặt ra hai bộ Đồng Văn và Nhã nhạc. Bộ Đồng văn thì chuyên tập âm luật để hòa nhạc, bộ Nhã nhạc thì chuyên chuộng nhân thanh, trọng về tiếng hát (Đ. H. Phạm 1985, 54).

The year Hồng Đức (1470 – 1497) the Lê dynasty...Chinese music was integrated into our music, created two ministries Đồng Văn and Nhã nhạc. Đồng văn ministry is specialised in music laws for ensemble music, Nhã nhạc ministry is specialised in human voice, focus on singing.

Even though acknowledging the adaptation of Chinese theory into Vietnamese music, Vietnamese writing persisted with a strong awareness of its own musical identity. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Phạm Đình Hổ repeated a few times in his *Vũ trung tùy bút* that Vietnamese music was different from Chinese music:

“Our scales are different from the Chinese” (Đ. H. Phạm 1985, 53).

“In general, our musics are not the same as the Chinese” (Đ. H. Phạm 1985, 58).

“The sound of our language is different to Chinese” (Đ. H. Phạm 1985, 60).

Besides adapting Chinese theoretical principles, Vietnam has also been influenced by the Champa – Indian musical culture of its Southern neighbour. The Champa Kingdom had several wars with Vietnam beginning around the tenth century and eventually became an annex of Vietnamese territory in 1832 (Vu and Sharrock 2014, 219-220). Ngô Sĩ Liên wrote that after the victory in 1044, Kinh Lý Thái Tông (1028 – 1054) took “Chàm female dancers who could sing Tây Thiên melodies”⁵ (Ngô 1697, 281). King Lý Thánh Tông (1054 – 1072) transcribed Champa song and percussion pieces and ordered musicians to perform. King Lý Cao Tông (1176 – 1210) commissioned a piece called *Chiêm Thành Âm* (Champa song) based on Champa music (Ngô 1697, 353). Some musicologists have suggested that there is a relationship between some Vietnamese instruments, genres and Cham music (Addiss 1971). Pham Duy stated that Champa music is “very close to the ‘oán’ mode of Southern music” (Pham 1975, 15-16).

From the end of the seventeenth century, the ‘Southern Forward’ of the Nguyễn kingdom further expanded into Vietnamese territory to include the Mekong Delta, shaping Vietnam as the country it is today by the eighteenth century. The new land which comprised part of the Champa kingdom and some of Cambodian territory, had a mixture of Vietnamese settlers, Chinese immigrants, the local Cham and Khmer people, and many minority ethnic groups of the central highlands and the Mekong Delta (Tana 1998, 15-17). In this new multi-cultural society, the Southern Vietnamese musical culture encountered new elements from the new ethnic groups of the central highlands and Khmer culture. Pham Duy suggested that Kong Thom music of the Khmer in Vietnam is related to Balinese gamelan music with its heptatonic scale (Pham 1975, 1-20).

⁵ The editors noted that this could be Champa songs and dances originated from India (Ngô, Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư 1697, 282).

The arrival of European missionaries in the seventeenth century and the protectorate of the French Empire from 1862 until 1954 opened up a new chapter of development and change in Vietnamese history and culture. Confucian tradition was challenged by new Western ideas. The Latin alphabet gradually replaced Chinese characters to become the official Vietnamese language ‘Chữ Quốc ngữ’. Vietnamese musicians of Opera and Tài tử music had the opportunity to perform at the Paris World Expositions in 1889 and 1900, and later at the Colonial Exposition in 1906 in Marseille. In Southern Vietnam, this period saw the unprecedented acceptance of Western musical instruments in Tài tử music and the emergence of the Cải Lương (Reformed Theatre), a fusion of Vietnamese and Western performing arts.

2.3 Musical instruments

From the fifteenth century, Vietnamese musical instruments were categorised according to the Chinese eight timbres: stone, earth, metal, wood, bamboo, gourde, silk, and membrane. Instrumental categorisation is applied in ensemble music which must follow the I-ching harmonious principles. The diagram in figure 11 shows my depiction of these principles. Lê Quý Đôn explains how the eight timbres should be combined in his *Vân đài loại ngữ*:

Trong bát âm chỉ có tiếng cách và tiếng mộc là không lệ thuộc với luật còn sáu nhạc cụ kia, tiếng trong hay đục, cao hay thấp, phải so xét lại cho đều thì nhạc mới hoà...kim ứng với thạch, thạch ứng với tơ, tơ ứng với trúc, trúc ứng với bào, bào ứng với thổ (Q. Đ. Lê 1773, 272).

In the eight timbres only membrane and wood are not dependent on laws but the other six timbres, bright or dark, low or high, must be considered appropriately for harmonious music...metal corresponds with stone, stone corresponds with silk, silk

corresponds with bamboo, bamboo corresponds with gourde, and gourde corresponds with earth.

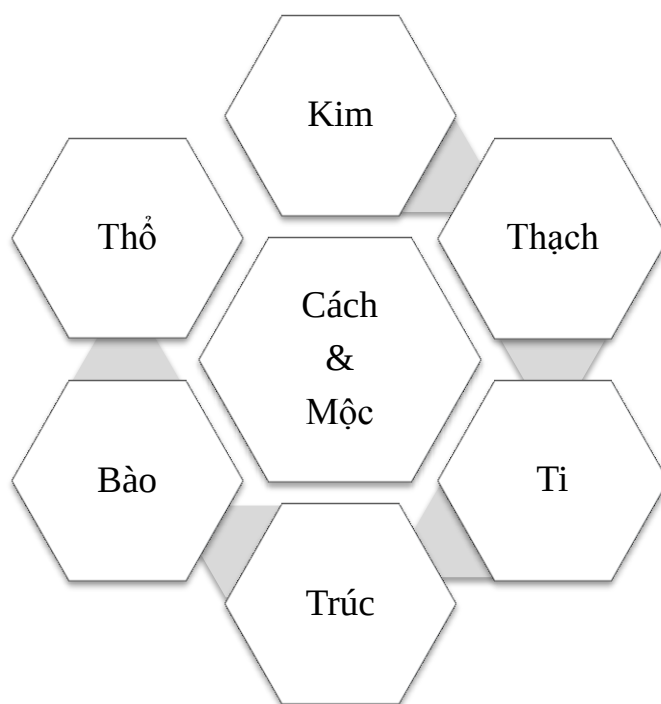


Figure 11: I-ching harmonious principles for Vietnamese musical instruments

A thorough survey of Vietnamese instruments can be found in Trần Văn Khê's *La Musique Vietnamienne Traditionnelle*, including measurements, pitch ranges, musical uses and the types of instrumental ensembles. Vietnamese instruments are divided into six categories: ancient, wind, and string instruments; percussion instruments with membrane, wooden and metal percussion instruments; and European instruments used in Vietnamese traditional music such as electric guitar, bass guitar and synthesisers. There are four main ensemble groups: court orchestra, ceremonial orchestra, chamber music ensemble, and theatre orchestra (V. K. Trần 1962).

2.4 Pitch organisation

Trần Văn Khê points out that there has been limited research into theoretical aspects of Vietnamese pitch organisation (V. K. Trần 1962). In the early decades of the twentieth

century, the study of Vietnamese pitch organisation by Gaston Knosp, Le Bris and Vietnamese scholars such as Nguyễn Năng Đắc, Nguyễn Đình Lai and Hoàng Yến provided a general understanding that Vietnamese scales are anhemitonic - pentatonic. However, Thái Văn Kiểm suggested that there were occasional uses of seven-note scales (Trainor 1977, 65-68). Vietnamese heptatonic structure was mentioned in scholarly writing in the late eighteenth century by Phạm Đình Hổ. There was an organised relationship in this structure: four “main” pitches having the role as “host” and three “additional” pitches as “guest”:

Cung đàn ta có những tiếng tính, tỉnh, tình, tỉnh, tung tang, tang.

Giọng kèn có những tiếng tí, um, bo tịch, tốt, tò, te (Đ. H. Phạm 1985, 60).

Đàn nguyệt...gảy thành những tiếng xự xang hò xế cồng liu ú xáng.

Có bốn tiếng chính là tính, tỉnh, tình, tỉnh, lại đặt thêm ba tiếng phụ là tung tang, tàng; bảy tiếng ấy thay đổi làm chủ khách mà thành ra xoang điệu

(Đ. H. Phạm 1985, 80).

Our instrumental music has the sounds tính, tỉnh, tình, tỉnh, tung tang, tàng. Our wind instrument has the sounds tí, um, bo tịch, tốt, tò, te.

Moon lute...has the sounds xự xang hò xế cồng liu ú xáng.

There are four main sounds tính, tỉnh, tình, tỉnh, then three more additional sounds tung tang, tàng; those seven sounds changing as host-guest to generate melodic directions.

Phạm Đình Hổ also acknowledged that during his time the Chinese pitch names were in use instead of the original Vietnamese pitch names (Đ. H. Phạm 1985, 80). An example of Vietnamese music score written in Chinese characters in the nineteenth century is provided in figure 12.

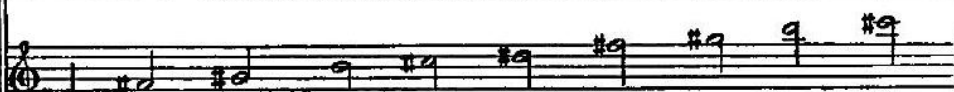
五六工六五六工尺。上尺四。上尺上。上尺四。合四。
上工。上工尺。上工尺上尺。五六工。五六工尺。
上尺四。上尺上尺四。合四上工。工上尺。工尺上工。
尺上尺。五上五上意。意上意上五上。意上。
五六。尺尺工。工上五六工六。
流水曲。

Figure 13: Chinese characters and Vietnamese ‘Chữ Quốc ngữ’ (Hoàng 1919)

合 合	Hó	主 主	Còng	任 任	Xang
西 西	Xí	度 度	Phạng, phàng	衣 衣	Y
上 上	Xang, xàng	六 六	Ljù, liu	意 意	Y

In 1922 Gaston Knosp compared and streamlined Vietnamese pitch and its Chinese comparable names with the Western equal-tempered scale (figure 14). Romanised Vietnamese ‘hồ xự xang xê công liu ú xáng’ were used as well as Chinese characters. The Vietnamese seven-sound structure was explained by Gaston Knosp as actually being a pentatonic scale with two pitches an octave above (Knosp 1922, 3107).

Figure 14: Gaston Knosp’s comparison (Knosp 1922, 3107)

Espèce		Désignation									
											
1 ^{re} principale Espèce forte plus forte	{	反	合	四	上	尺	工	六	五	上	尺
		fan	hồ tong	tú trúc	xang tang	xe	cong fan	luc	ngu i	sang	xe
2 ^e me Espèce	{		昌	藏	藏	靜	靜	情	星	虫	
			tung	tang	tang	tiñh	tiñh	tiñh	tiñh	tiñh	
3 ^e me Espèce	{	儋	奇	連	寂	子	且	希			
		ti	âm	bô	tich	ti	to	he			

Interestingly, the French musicologist Julien Tiersot noticed both anhemitonic - pentatonic structure and a heptatonic structure in Vietnamese music a few decades earlier than many scholarly writings of the twentieth century. At the Paris World Exposition in 1889, Tiersot attended one of the Vietnamese theatrical performances and notated some melodies from the melodic instruments performed. Tiersot’s notation showed both anhemitonic – pentatonic scale with C D E G A (figure 15); and a heptatonic structure with C D E F G B flat and B (figure 16) (Tiersot 1889).

Figure 15: Tiersot's notation showing anhemitonic – pentatonic (Tiersot 1889)



Figure 16: Tiersot's notation showing a heptatonic structure (Tiersot 1889)

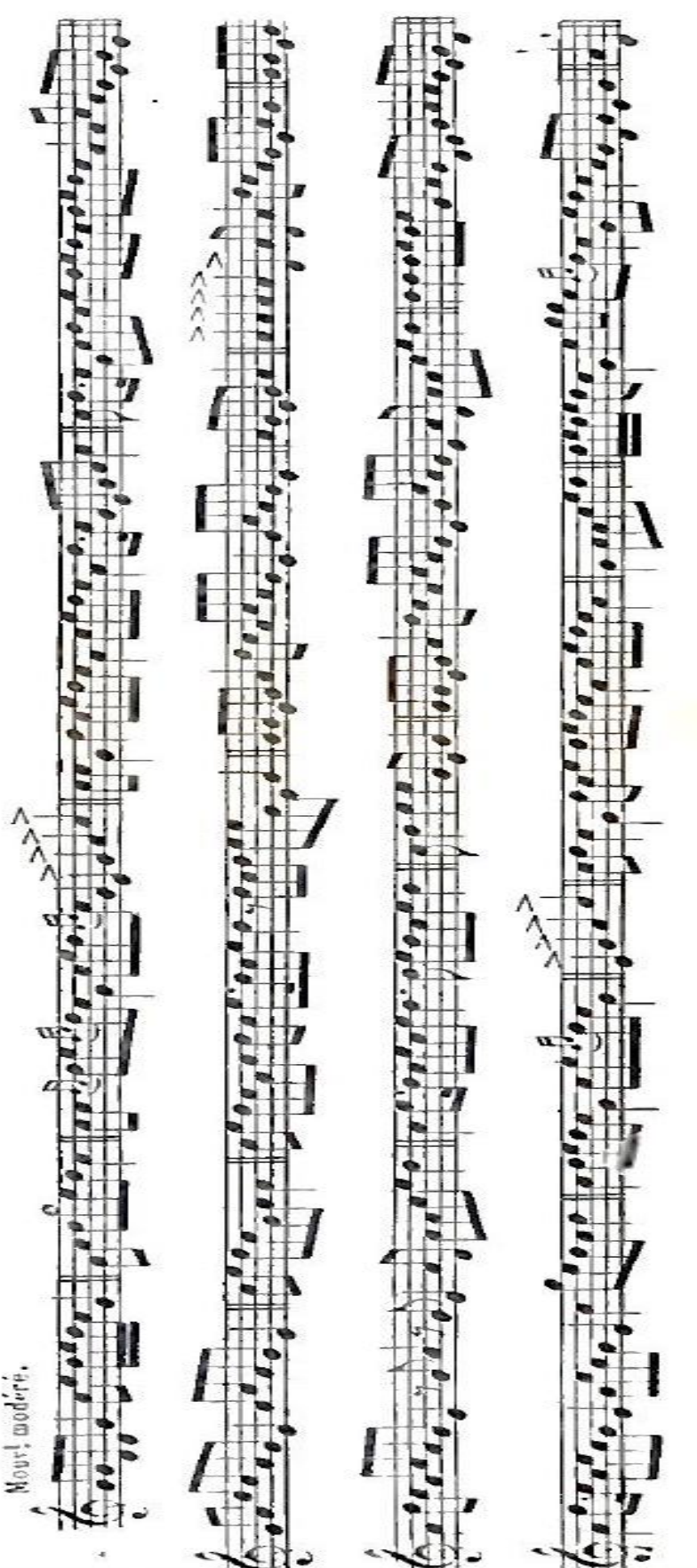


In the process of ethnomusicological research, I discovered that Tiersot also attended the Vietnamese performance eleven years later at the 1900 Paris Exposition. He gave a detailed account of the performance and notated “the fundamental repertoire of the music performed at the Exposition” which was later published as *Danse de l’Indo-chine* (Dance of Indochina) (Tiersot 1905). This notation again shows the anhemitonic – pentatonic C D E G A (figure 17).

Figure 17: *Danse de l'Indo-chine* (Dance of Indochina) (Tiersot 1905)

N° 8. DANSE DE L'INDO-CHINE (p. 48).

Mour, modéré.



Trần Văn Khê is the pioneer in theoretical aspects of pitch. His comparative study between the Western diatonic scale and Vietnamese scales shows that even though there are five main pitch names, hexatonic structures are possible with ornamentations (figure 18) (V. K. Trần, *Musique du Viet-Nam* 1996):

- Pentatonic structure: ‘Bắc’, ‘Nhạc’, ‘Sấp’, ‘Nam Huế’, ‘Nam South’, ‘Sa Mạc’.
- Hexatonic structure: ‘Oán’, ‘Vọng cổ’, ‘Hò mái nhì’.

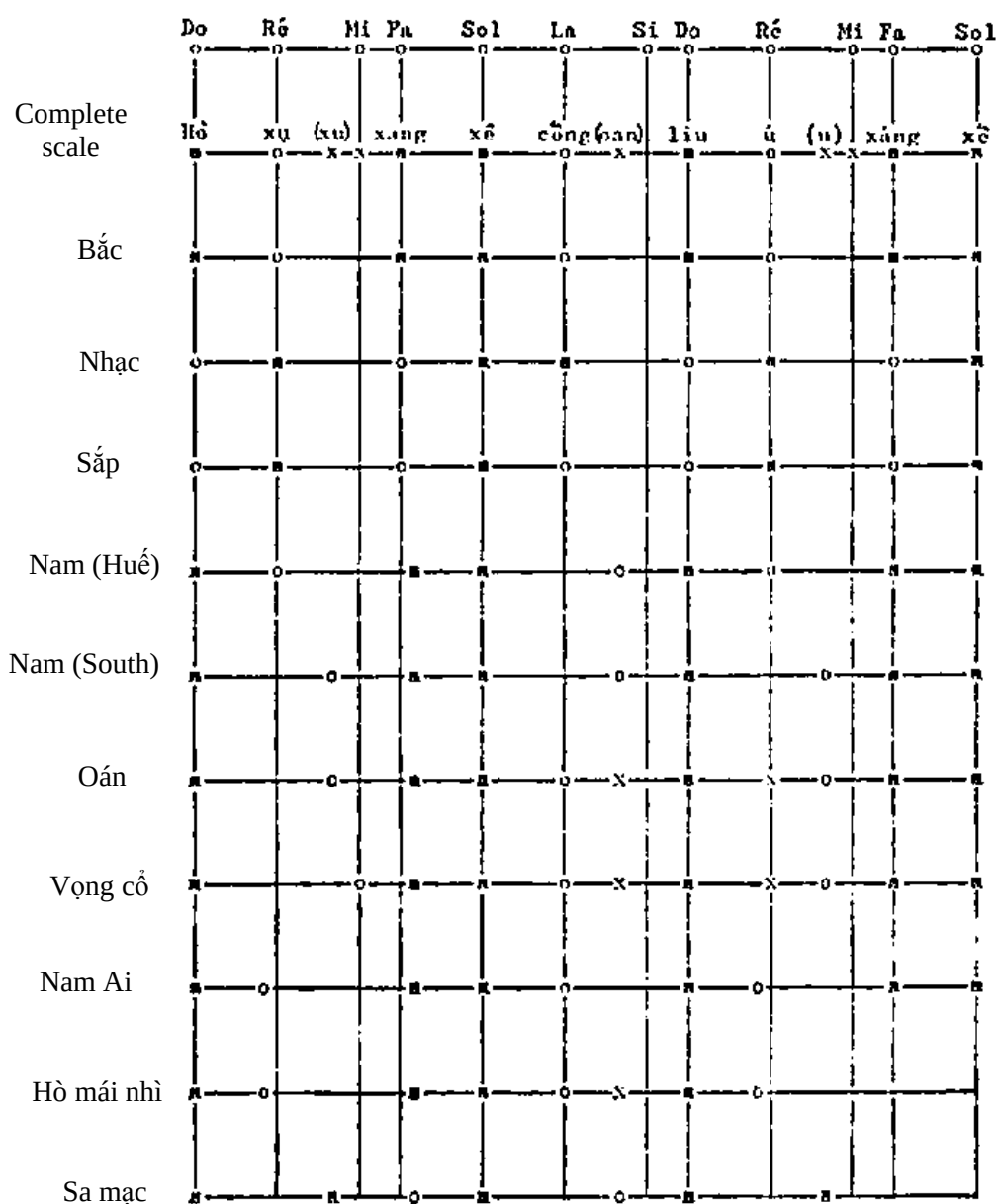
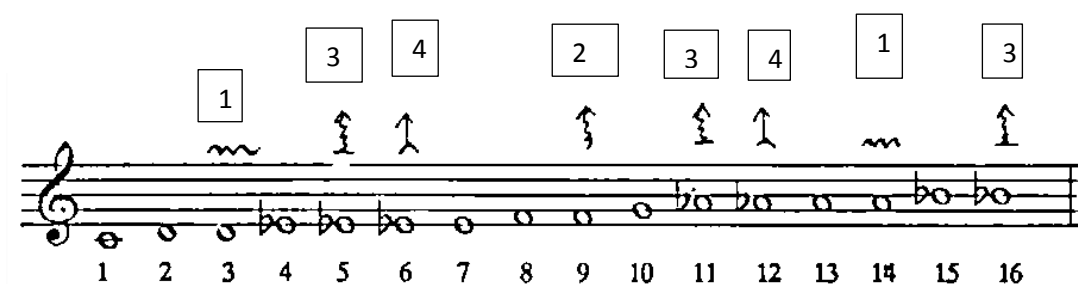


Figure 18: Vietnamese pitch organisation according to Trần Văn Khê (V. K. Trần 1996, 46)

With ornamentations, there are more pitch variations than were previously known. A later study in 1982 by Nguyễn Thuyết Phong suggested that there are thirteen pitches available in Vietnamese music (Nguyễn 1982, 455-456). Recent research published in Vietnam in the 1990s shows that in practice, there is more usage of hexatonic and even heptatonic structures in Tài tử music.

Through transcriptions of the twenty pieces of the Tài tử Ancient Repertoire performed by various masters, Kiều Tấn summarises that there are actually sixteen pitches in South Vietnamese music, which include eight main pitches (C D E flat, E, F, G, A, B flat) and another eight pitches achieved by ornamentations (figure 19).

Figure 19: Sixteen pitches in South Vietnamese music (Kiều, Tấn 1993, 320)



Notes:

1. ‘Rung’: normal vibrato
2. ‘Biến rung ít’: light change, between one-eighth to one-quarter of a semi-tone
3. ‘Biến rung vừa’: medium change, one-quarter to three-quarters semitone
4. ‘Biến nhiều’: strong change, one-quarter to seven-eighths semitone (Kiều, Tấn 1993, 305-399)

More recently, Vũ Nhật Thăng provides a sound palette with detailed calculations of the Tài tử modes which adds up to twenty-nine pitches (figure 20). With this finding, he suggests that Vietnamese music pitch systems are not the same as Chinese music as previously thought but closely related to Indian music (Vũ 1998, 107).

Figure 20: Twenty-nine pitches in Tài tử music (Vũ 1998)

Thang âm Bắc	HỒ	XỬ	XỮ	XANG	XÊ	CÔNG	PHAN	LỮ
	0	203,910	407,820	506,165	701,955	905,865	1012,331	1200
Thang âm Xuân	HỒ	XỬ	XỮ	XANG	XÊ	CÔNG	PHAN	LỮ
	0	189,699	386,314	514,285	701,955	886,918	1033,985	1200
Thang âm Ai	HỒ	XỬ	XỮ	XANG	XÊ	CÔNG	PHAN	LỮ
	0	203,910	369,925	526,446	701,955	857,143	1028,571	1200
Thang âm Dấn I	HỒ	XỬ	XỮ	XANG	XÊ	CÔNG	OAN	LỮ
	0	203,910	342,857	535,940	701,955	840,528	1020,264	1200
Thang âm Dấn II	HỒ	XỬ	XỮ	XANG	XÊ	CÔNG	OAN	LỮ
	0	203,910	386,314	551,318	701,955	867,970	1033,985	1200
Thang âm bình quân	DO	RE	MI	FA	SOL	LA	SI	DO

2.5 Rhythm organisation

Until the end of the nineteenth century, Vietnamese music notation had contained pitch names only with some hint of melodic phrases, but without any indication of rhythmic features or expressive techniques. Scholarly writings with reference to the concept of Vietnamese rhythm only emerged in the early twentieth century. The earliest sources of this literature were Hoàng Yến's *La Musique à Hué "đờn Nguyệt" et "đờn Tranh"* (Music of Hué: moon lute and zither) written in French; Lê Mai's *Bản đờn kìm* in 1925 and Cử Thiện's *Cầm ca Tân điệu* in 1926, both written in Vietnamese. These sources provide fundamental information on the Vietnamese concept of rhythm.

Like other Asian music, some Vietnamese genres have non-metrical characters. For instance, the 'Rao' section in Tài tử is based on rhythmic and melodic improvisation in free time. The concept of beats exists in Vietnamese music as 'phách' in the North or 'nhịp' in the Central and South (V. K. Trần 1962). 'Nội phách' (also 'phách chánh diện') or 'nhịp nội' indicates that a note is played on the beat. 'Ngoại phách' or 'nhịp

ngoại’ points to the nature of the syncopation, indicating that a note is played before the beat; however the exact duration is not specified.

Similar Western metrical organisation could be compared to Vietnamese concept of ‘nhịp’. The common metrical types are one-beat time (nhịp trường-canh); duple time (nhịp-đôi); quadruple time (nhịp-tư); and octuple time (nhịp-tám); triple time is rare. There are also metres of sixteen beats and thirty-two beats in Cải lương (V. K. Trần 1962, 271) (T. H. Lê 2011). Closely corresponding to those metrical structures, Vietnamese melodic phrases are also in one, two, four, and eight beat lengths (V. T. Lê 1926). In ensemble performance practice, a ‘cái sinh’ or ‘song lang’ (clapper) is used to mark the musical punctuality of those cycles.

During the first half of the twentieth century, various methods of notation were developed to capture basic Vietnamese rhythmic features. Diagrams were used to provide indications of measure and main beats. Even though exact note values were not included, those systems provided sufficient details for an informed performance. There were also different signs and symbols invented to notate Vietnamese pitch, including Chinese characters.

Two different examples of notation in this period are provided. Figure 21 shows the introduction of *Lưu Thủy* in free time and free rhythm with pitch names in Chinese characters. Figure 22 shows *Dạ Bán Chung Tình* with eight vertical lines denoting a measure of eight-beats. Most of these diverse methods are no longer in use.

Figure 21: *Lưu Thủy*, Introduction (Hoàng 1919)

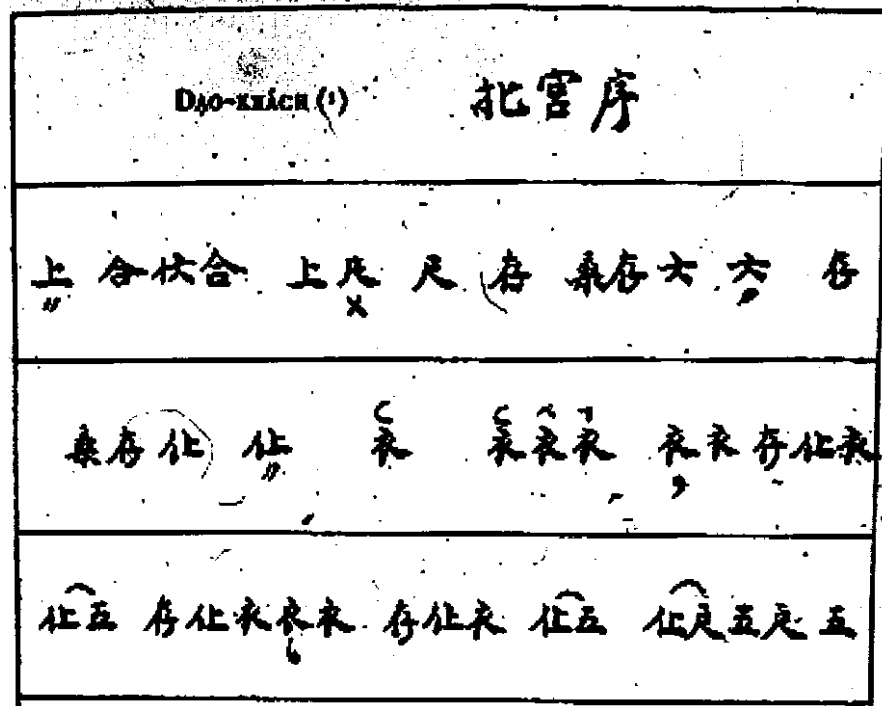
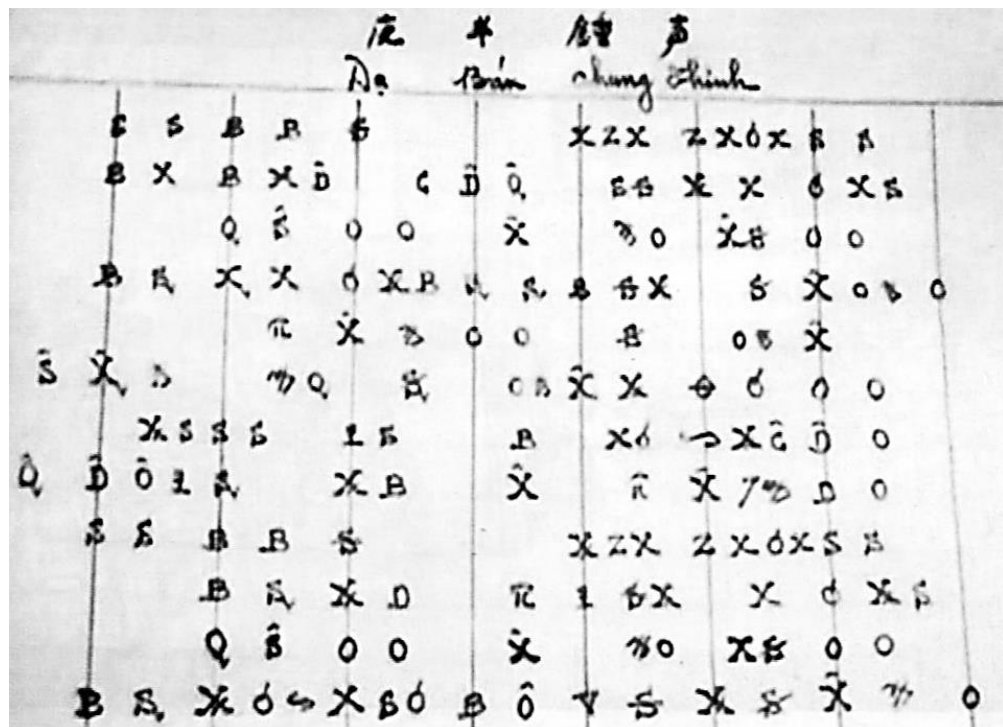


Figure 22: *Dạ Bán Chung Tinh* (V. K. Trần 1962)



The emergence and popularity of ‘Chữ Quốc ngữ’ has played a role in music notation. This method of music notation uses language punctuation and typography to identify pitch and basic rhythms. Pitch names are written in Latin alphabet (hò xự xang xê cồng

liu ú xáng) while rhythmic features are notated with full stop, italic word, bullet point, guillemet (French quotation mark), parentheses and dash. Cữ-Thiện and Lê-Mai were the pioneers of this approach; their principles still exist today. Cữ-Thiện explained how to interpret the parentheses and the dash to realise ‘nhịp-nội’, ‘nhịp-ngoại’ and ‘nhịp song-lang’:

Nhịp trường canh.— Nhịp-nội, thứ chữ xiên. (phải nhịp cho trùng chữ đó) Nhịp ngoại, dấu ngan vẫn này — ở sau chữ đòn (Nghĩa là: chữ đòn qua rồi mới nhịp).

Nhịp song-lang.— Nhịp-nội, dấu này () bao chữ xiên. Tỉ như: (Hò) (Xự) v.v..

Nhịp-ngoại, dấu này () bao cái ngan vẫn (—) (V. T. Lê 1926).

Nhịp trường canh. - Nhịp-nội, the italic words. (must nhịp right on that word). Nhịp - ngoại, this short hyphen – after note name (Meaning is: note name passes then nhịp).

Nhịp song-lang.- Nhịp-nội, this sign () cover italic word. For example: (Hò) (Xự) v.v.. Nhịp-ngoại: this sign () cover the short dash.

Two examples of this notation method are given below. The italic words in figure 23 denote the main beats. In figure 24, the main beats are indicated in three ways: the italic words, the long dashes (—); and the italic words inside the parentheses (*xang*). The long dash inside the parentheses represents the ‘nhịp song-lang’ which is also the strong beat to be played with a clapper.

Figure 23: Excerpt from *Mình-Châu*, one-beat measures (V. T. Lê 1926)

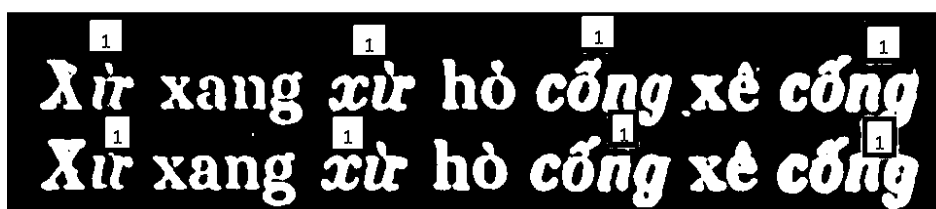
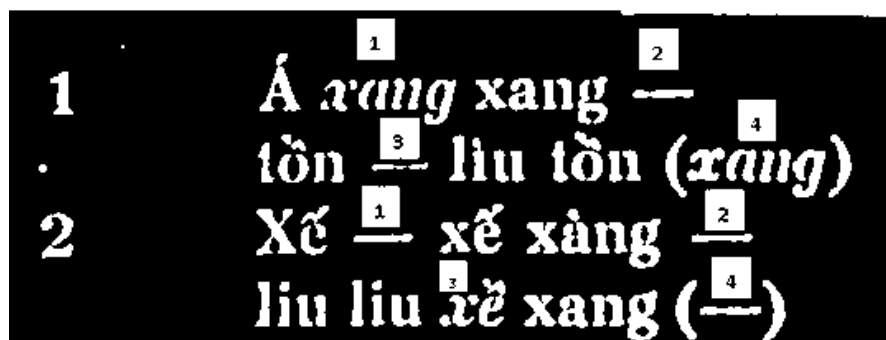


Figure 24: Excerpt from *Nam-Ai*, four-beat measures (V. T. Lê 1926)

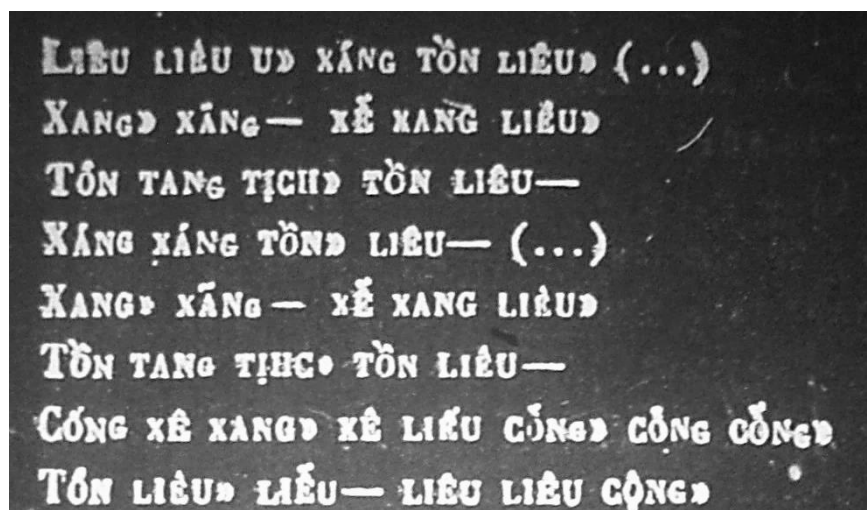


Lê-Mai employed a similar method of notation (figure 25). To identify the main beats, he used the French quotation mark (») for ‘nhịp-nội’ instead of the parenthese. His method also shows the musical structure by using bullet points:

Chữ nào có 1 vòng đôi (») dựa bên, là nhịp nội. Chữ nào có 1 ngan dài (—), là nhịp ngoại. Khi đờn dứt câu, mà có 3 chấm (• • •) thì phải gõ khơi ngoài mô 1 cái, sẽ tiếp đờn câu kế. Câu nào có 6 chấm (• • • • • •) thì gõ ngoài mô 2 cái. Câu nào có 9 chấm (• • • • • • • • •) thì gõ ngoài mô ba cái (Lê-Mai 1925).

The note name which has 1 double bracket (») on the side, is nhịp nội. The note name which has a long dash (—), is nhịp ngoại. When one finishes a phrase which has 3 dots (• • •), one must tap the outer part of the bridge one time , then play the next phrase. The phrase has 6 dots (• • • • • •) one must tap the outer part of the bridge 2 times. The phrase has 9 dots (• • • • • • • • •) one must tap the outer part of the bridge three times).

Figure 25: *Bình Bán Chấn* (Lê-Mai 1925)



Nowadays, most Vietnamese traditional music has been transcribed into Western notation by many scholars and teachers with exact rhythmic divisions. During the research into this creative project, I have discovered that rigid Western rhythmic values do not reflect the full aspect of Vietnamese rhythmic organisation. However, this subject is not within the scope of this project.

2.6 Expressive techniques

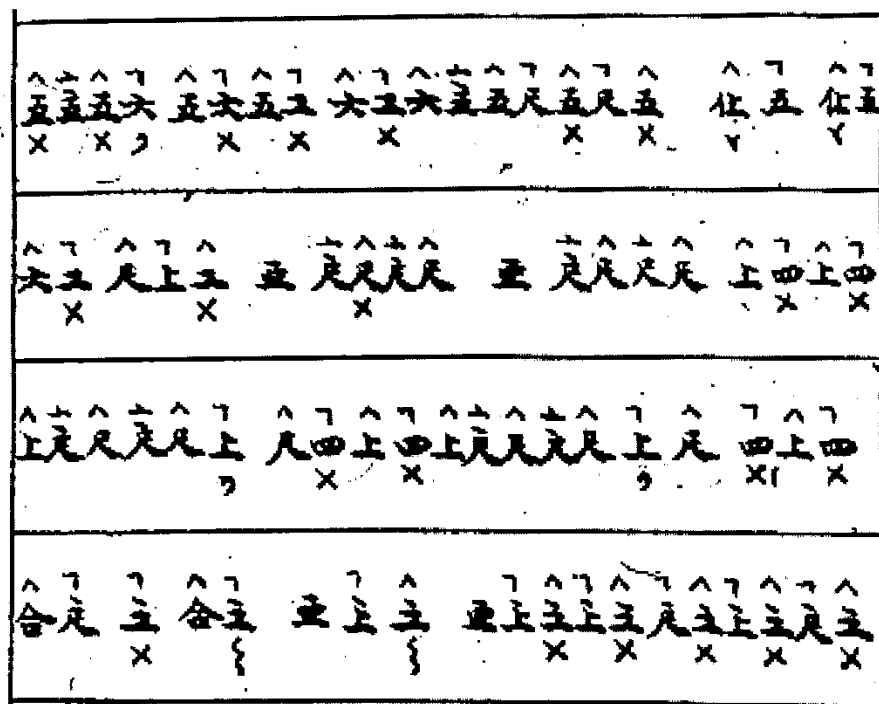
Vietnamese instrumental and vocal techniques were briefly mentioned in Lê Quý Đôn's *Văn Đài Loại Ngữ* since the eighteenth century (Q. Đ. Lê 1773, 276-277).⁶ A more detailed writing on Vietnamese techniques for the đàn Nguyệt (moon lute) and the đàn Tranh (zither) was published in the early twentieth century by Hoàng Yên (Hoàng 1919). His extensive list of “conventional signs” which covers a range of techniques for đàn Tranh including fingering and ornamentations is shown in figure 26. An excerpt of the piece *Dạo Khách* (figure 27) shows how this method is used in a score, where fingering is written above and ornamentations are written below the designated pitches.

⁶ The instrumental techniques mentioned were ‘co’, ‘ấn’, ‘bật giây’, ‘vuốt’, ‘nấn’ and ‘co giây’. Lê Quý Đôn also noted some vocal techniques how to sing in pitch properly.

Figure 26: Instrumental techniques of 'đờn Tranh' (Hoàng 1919, 330)

Signes conventionnels du đờn tranh :	
	Á, « arpèger ». Faire vibrer les cordes d'un ton aigu à un ton grave avec le ponce. Le á doit être long et aisé.
	Jouer avec le ponce.
	Jouer avec l'index.
	Jouer avec le médus.
	Nhấn, appuyer la corde sur le sillet.
	Appuyer la corde sur le sillet, légèrement, puis fortement.
	Nhấn mạnh, appuyer fortement la corde sur le sillet.
	Nhấn hãm, serrer le manche en appuyant fort.
	Nhấn vuốt, presser en faisant glisser les doigts.
	Nhấn rung, presser en faisant produire un son tremblé.
	Nhấn nháy, « staccato » : appuyer fortement, et enlever immédiatement les doigts.
	Xê hất, voir aux signes conventionnels du đờn nguyệt.
	Gỗ không, id.
	Ngón hốt, pincer l'octave : lorsque deux notes du même ton s'écrivent l'une au-dessus de l'autre, on les fait vibrer à la fois.

Figure 27: Instrumental techniques used in a score (Hoàng 1919)



The second half of the twentieth century to the present has seen Trần Văn Khê and Nguyễn Vĩnh Bảo become the authoritative masters in this field. Technically and musically, these instrumental expressive techniques are employed to achieve specific pitches, ornamentations and mood of certain mode (V. B. Nguyễn 2003, 31) (Vũ 1998, 44-47) (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 160).

John Trainor, an American scholar who studied with Nguyễn Vĩnh Bảo in the 1970s, described the four main expressive techniques used in Vietnamese music in comparison with Western concepts:

Mỗ requires an abrupt motion of the left hand altering pitch of the string upwards usually to the next high pitch in the mode. The result is something akin to the inverted mordent of Baroque chamber music

Rung is a trill with glissandi between each note...The waving motion of the left hand used to produce the rung ornament is in the same way similar to the production of vibrato on Western instruments.

Lái is a type of mỗ performed by pressing the string to the next higher note in the mode and then brushing the fingers lightly.

The nhấn mỗ or the brief melodic patterns are produced by manipulation of the string by the left hand. The performer plucks a given string and increase or decrease the pressure on the left hand side of the string without a second attack (Trainor 1977, 8-12).

Whilst many different ways of notation have been used since the early twentieth century, in 1972 the National School of Music (now the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music) introduced a standardised method of notation which combined Western and Vietnamese signs and symbols (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 78-89). An example of the current notation method is shown in figure 28, which indicates how ornaments are used to achieve the pitches and mood of the ‘oán’ mode. The standardised signs for main expressive techniques in this except are as follows:

Rung =  Mỗ = V Lái =  or  Nhấn = 

Figure 28: Current notation method (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 181-183)



2.7 Harmony and Texture

The concept and sounds of Western harmony are not comparable with Vietnamese music. On first encounter with Vietnamese theatrical performances at the Paris Exposition in 1889, Western critics strongly condemned the dissonance of the music. Hippolyte Lemaire described the Vietnamese music ensemble as a “horrible charivari of saucepan solos accompanied by drums, cymbals and tramway horns” (Fauser 2005, 189). Within this hostile sentiment, Jules Lemaitre’s review could be considered “the most gruesome description of the music” and the Vietnamese performance. Annegret Fauser cited:

And what music! The most discordant charivari of lunatic amateurs would seem like a celestial harmony after this. Heavy strokes on a piece of wood or on pots; a kind of a flute whose sound enters your ears like a rotary drill. It is music for torturers (Fauser 2005, 189).

My research to the French primary sources has discovered that the hostility towards the dissonance in Vietnamese music was replaced with a much more positive attitude eleven years later at the 1900 Paris World Exposition. The theatrical production *La Bague Enchantée* (The Magic Ring) featured Vietnamese musicians accompanying European dancers who were led by the famous French ballerina Cléo de Mérode at the *Theatre d’Indo-chine* (Theatre of Indochina). It was a huge success and attracted much attention from the media. The French musicologist Tiersot wrote in his review: “Is it necessary to recall once again the Cambodian dance which, was accompanied by the musicians from very truly Cochinchina?” (Tiersot, Le Ménestrel 1900). In a way, the completely contrasting reactions from the Western audience towards this performance and the performance at the 1889 Exposition reflect the diversity in Vietnamese music.

Tiersot noted an elaborated version of heterophonic structure and a hint of ‘harmony’ in Vietnamese music:

These instruments together accompanied the dances in a kind of unity, not without leaving certain parts some independence...Our musicians do not play identically the same thing...provided that everyone begins on the same and stop on the same note at the cadence...So there is, in these kind of collective performance, a certain individual improvisation.

The lower string instruments plucked detached notes following the vocals to form a tonic alternating with its dominant, in the same rhythm with the upper layer, which, it was performed by the sour instruments, notably the *Co* (2 string violin). At the end of the dance, the female voices unified with the instruments to double the vocal line (Tiersot 1905, 47).

Trần Văn Khê’s survey of the writings by Western scholars such as Selon Le Bris, Maurice Courant and many others in the early twentieth century continued to confirm the general observation that harmony did not exist in Vietnamese music. Shedding a light on this subject, Trần Văn Khê explained that Vietnamese harmonic structure exists as a parallel melodic texture, in which a main melody and its elaborated versions are performed at the same time. He illustrated this texture in an ensemble of five instruments, in which ‘Kim’ plays the main melody while other instruments play its elaborated versions (figure 29). Those parallel melodies form a horizontal structure which at times creates a type of contrapuntal polyphony (V. K. Trần 1962, 289-295). Recent research on Vietnamese music refers to this kind of structure as heterophony (Miller and Shahriari 2012) (Nguyễn 1982, 453-454).

Figure 29: Vietnamese texture (V. K. Trần 1962, 290)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a Vietnamese ensemble. Each system consists of five staves, each representing a different instrument. The instruments and their descriptions are as follows:

- Sáo** (flûte traversière)
- Kim ou nguyệt** (luth en forme de lune)
- Tam** (luth à 3 cordes)
- Có ou nhị** (vièle à 2 cordes)
- Dúc huyền** (monocorde)
- Sanh** (clicquettes)

The first system shows the initial measures of the music, with the Sáo and Sanh parts marked with an 'x' at the end of the first measure. The second system continues the music, with the Sáo and Sanh parts marked with an 'x' at the end of the second measure. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals, all in a traditional Western musical notation style.

2.8 Categories of Vietnamese traditional music

Trần Văn Khê and Phạm Duy have been the most influential pioneers in the endeavour to systemise the diverse and complex genres of Vietnamese music. Focusing on the Kinh group, Trần Văn Khê streamlined Vietnamese genres into five main categories: court music, ceremonial and religious music, music for diversion, theatre music, and folk songs (V. K. Trần 1996). Phạm Duy's system comprises four categories: regional music, folk songs, chamber music, and theatre music, in which music of the minorities

is included but court music and ceremonial/religious music are not mentioned (Pham 1975).

Even though those classifications could be a useful reference, there is a literature that raises the issues in classifying Vietnamese musical genres. For example, John Trainor has addressed the problems by classifying *Tài tử* music as ‘chamber music’ (Trainor 1977). My research on Vietnamese social and musical contexts has also identified the issues in Trần Văn Khê’s ‘music for diversion’ and Phạm Duy’s ‘chamber music’. While those genres could be performed “for diversion”, they are also used for other purposes like personal enrichment and even as a profession; on the other hand, the concept of Western ‘chamber music’ is quite different to the development of Vietnamese traditional music.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter reviews Vietnamese traditional music in its various contexts through the study of primary and secondary sources in Vietnamese, French and English dating from the eleventh century to the present day. This review has found that even though having strong influences from Chinese culture and the willingness to adopt new ideas from other cultures, there has still been a strong awareness and existence of a Vietnamese musical identity throughout its history.

The study of pitch organisation shows that Vietnamese pitch is based on non-equal tempered tuning with various structures of pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic scales and modes. Specific instrumental expressive techniques are used to achieve the various pitch structures. There is a considerable element of improvisation in Vietnamese music in which basic features are given as the rhythmic framework. The study of harmony and texture has found that the Western concept of harmony does not exist and is not

comparable with Vietnamese music. Instead, Vietnamese texture has a different kind of ‘harmonic’ known as heterophony. However, this ‘harmonic texture’ occurs mostly in ensemble performances.

In this review, some recent and newly-found documents from Vietnamese and French sources have been translated for the first time to illustrate the study, also documents previously not available in English. Research findings have provided a holistic understanding of Vietnamese traditional music for this creative project. The informed knowledge will be used as a reference for Vietnamese musical characteristics and cultural authenticity and also as a source of inspiration in the compositional process. This method reflects the practice of creative ethnomusicology as described by Euba: “the creative application of ethnomusicological methods. It is the practice whereby an investigator goes beyond analysis and uses information derived from analysis as the basis of creative work” (Boyd 2005).

CHAPTER 3:

COMPOSITIONS WITH

VIETNAMESE INFLUENCES

Introduction

This chapter will document the compositional process of interweaving selected Vietnamese materials with Western art music styles. The selection of appropriate Vietnamese genres for this creative project has been a difficult and time-consuming task which has required detailed examination of material from various Vietnamese genres. Through this lengthy process, three genres have been selected which represent the categories of Vietnamese music; and also the three main regions of Vietnam.

1. Folk song: This vocal genre represents the ‘folk song’ category by Trần Văn Khê and also by Phạm Duy.
2. Tài tử music: This genre represents Trần Văn Khê’s ‘music for diversion’ and Phạm Duy’s ‘chamber music’ which has a repertoire with influences from folk songs, court music, and ceremonial music. Later on it has also been used in Cải lương (reformed theatre).
3. The Gong culture: This genre represents Phạm Duy’s ‘regional music’ which covers music of various Vietnamese ethnic minorities.

As stated in the Introduction, this chapter provides the development of the “transformational process” from ethnomusicological research into composition. It is not an analytical study of the creative works. However, there are analytical discussions on the musical-technical challenges and possibilities in the process of weaving together Vietnamese and Western art music styles using the guitar as the expressive medium.

The creative works of this project are divided into three categories: compositions with influences from folk songs and Tài tử music; compositions with influences from the Gong culture; and compositions with new creative idioms:

Compositions with influences from Vietnamese folk songs and Tài tử music

1. *White Bird* is based on the folk song *Cò lả* (the hovering egret).
2. *Fantasia* is based on the folk song *Trống cơm* (the rice drum).
3. *Song of the Moon* is based on the folk song *Hát hội Trăng rằm* (song of the full moon festival).
4. *Song of the Nightingale* is based on the folk song *Lý chim quyên* (song of the nightingale).
5. *Song of the South* is based on the folk song *Lý con sáo* (song of the hill myna).
6. *Sunset* is based on the folk song *Lý chiều chiều* (song of the afternoon).

Compositions with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture

1. *Call of the Mountain Forest* is inspired by the mystical landscape and the supernatural world of the Vietnamese highlands.
2. *Come Together* describes the sounds and activities of the highland harvesters during a good rice crop.
3. *Moonlight* imitates the tone colour of the Vietnamese gongs using natural harmonics.
4. *Gods of the Highlands* depicts the ambience and ritual rhythms of the highlands
5. *Highland Dreaming* is a new melody and dance rhythms incorporating Gong music idioms.
6. *Nocturne* is a study of natural harmonics and the new staccato-harmonic duotone technique to capture the overtone ambience of Gong music.

Compositions with new creative idioms

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Dawn of the Mountain Forest</i> | 4. <i>Heart of the Ocean</i> |
| 2. <i>Euphoria</i> | 5. <i>Farewell to the Mountain Forest</i> |
| 3. <i>Prelude</i> | |

Summary of musical symbols

Guitar strings

①②③④⑤⑥

Left hand fingering:

1 = index; 2 = middle; 3 = ring; 4 = little

Right hand fingering:

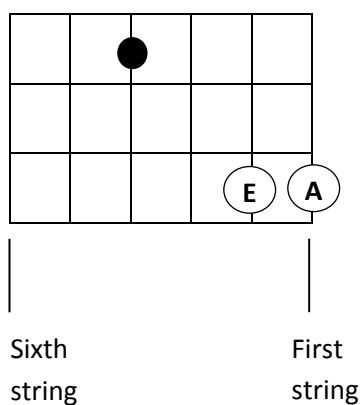
p = thumb; i = index, m = middle, a = ring;

x = little

Roman numerals

Indication of frets. For example: XII = twelfth fret

Guitar chord chart



The vertical lines denote the strings.

The horizontal lines denote the frets.

A black dot denotes where a finger is pressed on the fret.

A circle with a letter inside denotes the pitch name and where the finger is pressed.

Strumming directions

↓ = strumming downwards

↑ = strumming upwards

Tambora technique

tamb.

Natural harmonics



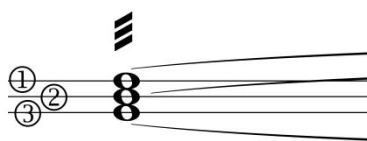
Rasgueado technique

rasg.

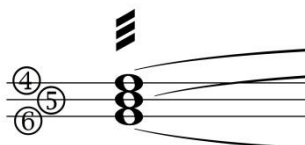
Glissando technique



Tremolo on the treble strings between the nut and the tuning pegs



String scratching on the bass strings



3.1 INFLUENCES FROM FOLK SONGS AND TÀI TỬ MUSIC

This section is in three parts. The first part discusses the ethnomusicological findings on the Vietnamese folk songs and the relationship between Lý songs and the Tài tử instrumental music. The second part demonstrates how the theoretical foundation and ethnomusicological results informed the creative process of interweaving Vietnamese materials and Western styles by exploring the musical-technical possibilities of the guitar as the expressive medium. The third part documents in detail the development and finalisation of *Song of the South* (based on ‘Lý con sáo’) and *Song of the Nightingale* (based on ‘Lý chim quyên’), and an overview of other compositions based on Lý songs and the Tài tử music. In this transformational process, Vietnamese modes and rhythmic features, and melodic directions embedded in the tonal language, social context and metaphors of the selected folk songs are used as the source of compositional material and inspiration. This section also demonstrates how creative outcomes have been influenced, refined and changed in the compositional process, based on practical knowledge acquired from field trips to observe and perform with Vietnamese traditional musicians at the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music.

3.1.1.i Vietnamese folk songs

Vietnamese folk songs reflect many aspects of people's lives in various regions throughout the centuries. There are many types of folk songs such as Ru, Hò, Lý, Quan họ, Xẩm, Xoan, Váy, etc. Using metaphors to express social-cultural values and personal sentiments, the folk songs manifest the local identity of the various communities with their regional language accents and musical variations. Vietnamese folk song's melodies are usually in tritonic scale (tonic, fourth and fifth), tetratonic scales, and four pentatonic modes 'Bắc', 'Nam', 'Xuân', and 'Oán' within an octave range (figure 30). It is common to have tonic shifts and also mode changes in folk songs (D. Phạm 1990, 82-83) (Lư 2006, 100-109) (V. Tô 2002, 63-81) (Đào, Huy and Tú 1984, 62-78).

Figure 30: Vietnamese modes 'Bắc' (I), 'Nam' (II), 'Xuân' (III) and 'Oán' (IV) (Lư 2006, 55)

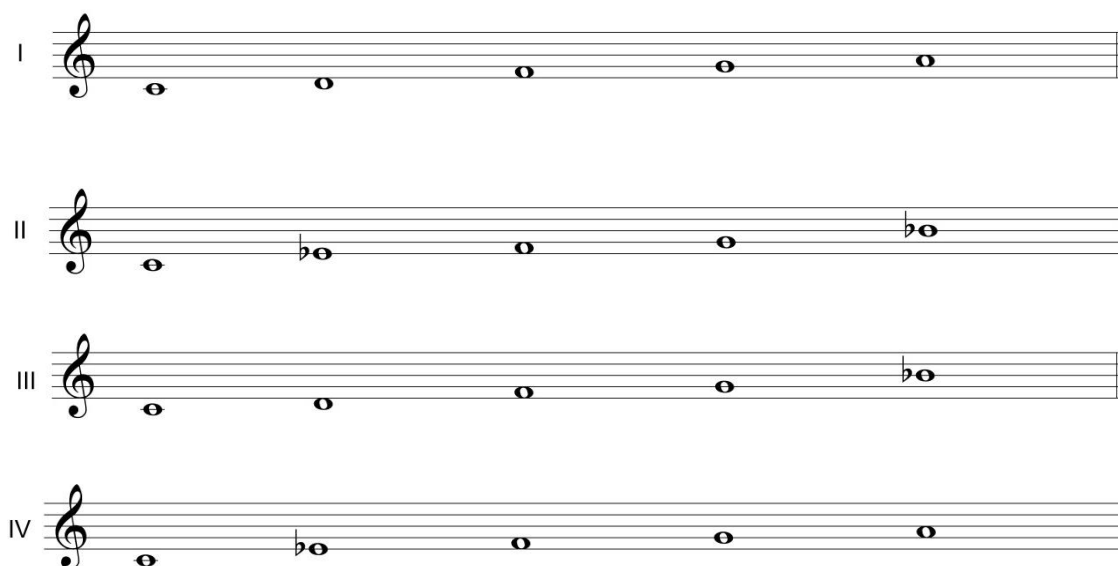


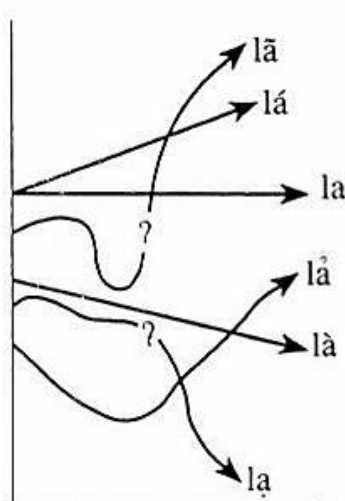
Figure 31 is an excerpt from a folk song from South Vietnam showing both tonic shift and modal changes. It starts with the pentatonic D 'Bắc' (D E G A B), then at bar four is transposed to the pentatonic A 'Nam' (A C D E G).

Figure 31: Tonic shifts and mode changes in a Vietnamese folk song (Lư 2006, 108)



Melodic and rhythmic characteristics of Vietnamese folk songs have roots in the tonal language. The Vietnamese language has six tones *ngang, sắc, huyền, hỏi, ngã, nặng*.⁷ In a language context, these tones change the meaning of a word. For instance, the word *la* (yell) has another five different meanings depending on the tone: *lá* (leaf); *là* (to be); *lả* (tired, close to the ground); *lã* (not related, not important); *lạ* (strange). In a musical context, each tone has its unique pitch level, contour and intensity (Đ.-H. Nguyễn 1997, 26), therefore melodic directions are predetermined by these characters to a great extent.

Figure 32: Diagram of Vietnamese six tones (Đ.-H. Nguyễn 1997, 26)



⁷ In some parts of Vietnam, these six tones are simplified into only five or four tones (Đ.-H. Nguyễn 1997, 26).

A diagram (figure 32) of pitch level and contour of the six tones is provided. Figure 33 illustrates how melodic directions are pre-determined in a couplet.

Figure 33: Example of melodic directions

→	→	↗	↗	→	→		
Yêu	nhau	cởi	áo	cho	nhau		
↘	↘	↘	↗	→	↘	↗	→
Về	nhà	mẹ	hỏi	qua	cầu	gió	bay

While melodic organisation is affected by the tonal pitch levels, rhythmic organisation of Vietnamese folk songs is also closely related to its language rhythms. Furthermore, since most Vietnamese folk songs are based on folk poetry (Đào, Huy and Tú 1984, 13-89) (D. Phạm 1990); its rhythmic organisation and song structures are also predetermined by its language characters to a great extent. Two examples of how folk songs' rhythmic features already exist in folk poetry are given below. Figure 34 shows note values including mostly quaver and minims; there is a greater variety of note values used in figure 35, including triplet, quaver, crotchet and minim.

Figure 34: Vietnamese poetry rhythm 1 (D. Phạm 1990, 23)

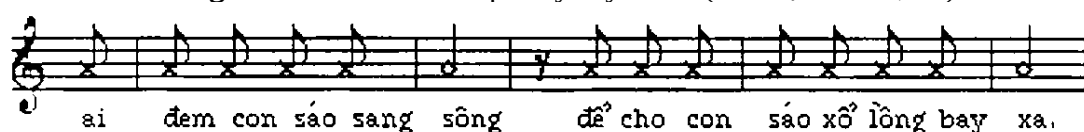
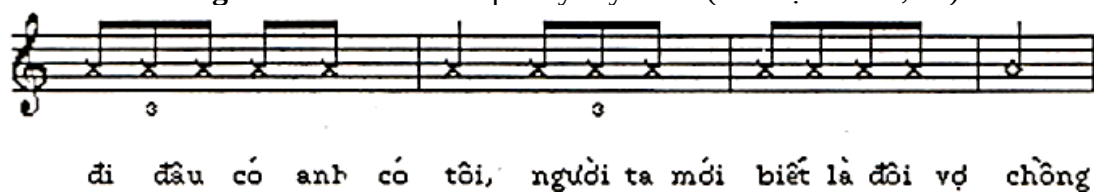


Figure 35: Vietnamese poetry rhythm 2 (D. Phạm 1990, 23)



3.1.1.ii Tài tử music and Lý folk songs

While folk songs represent the heritage of the Vietnamese vocal music genre, Tài tử music reflects the development of Vietnamese instrumental music from the fifteenth century to the present day. Originating from the ritual music of Nhã nhạc (Vietnamese court music) and Huế music (Pham 1975) (V. K. Trần 1962); Tài tử music emerged in the late nineteenth century and is still being widely performed today. The music is primarily for solo instruments, predominantly đàn kìm, đàn gáo, and đàn tranh,⁸ but in later times it was also performed as an ensemble piece.⁹

The relationship between Vietnamese folk songs and Tài tử music has been documented since the early twentieth century. Many scholars have officially recorded Lý as the first category in Tài tử repertoire: “Lý first, Ngâm second, Nam third, Oán fourth, Điềm fifth, Xuất sixth, Chính seventh, Ngự eighth, Phẩm ninth, Thủ tenth” (Nhứt Lý, Nhì Ngâm, Tam Nam, Tứ Oán, Ngũ Điềm, Lục Xuất, Thất Chính, Bát Ngự, Cửu Phẩm, Thập Thủ) (Trần, Văn Khê; Kiều, Tấn 2011, 177-218). There are four pentatonic modes used in Lý songs (Lư 2006, 73), which correspond to the four modal organisations ‘Bắc’, ‘Nam’, ‘Xuân’, ‘Oán’ of Tài tử music.

There are more than three hundred songs in the Lý repertoire from the various regions of Vietnam. Originating from Sino-Vietnamese, the word ‘Lý’ means song from the rural areas (V. Tô 2002, 103); or “village/peasant” (V. T. Đào 1951, 379) (Pham 1975, 49). According to Pham Duy, elements of Lý song also exist in other Vietnamese genres such as Chèo, Ả đào, Cải lương, Sắc bùa, Huế songs, Quan họ, Châu văn, and

⁸ Đàn kìm: two-string plucked instrument; đàn gáo: two-string bowed instrument; đàn tranh: sixteen string zither.

⁹ Later, other string instruments and singers have also been used in the ensembles and become the art of Đờn ca Tài tử which was recognised as a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013. More ethnomusicological research on the art of Đờn ca Tài tử is provided in Appendix VIII.

many more (D. Phạm 1990, 27). In the beginning, only some Lý songs were considered appropriate as Tài tử music.¹⁰ From the 1990s to the present, more Lý songs have been accepted into the Tài tử repertoire (Trần, Văn Khê; Kiều, Tấn 2011, 39; 219-231).

The transformation of Lý songs into Tài tử music embedded the regional musical characteristics and also the social context of the local people, such as regional dialects, landscapes, customs, thinking and activities. This relationship brings about in parallel a comparison between how a melody is used in a vocal genre and an instrumental genre. For example, while in Lý songs a melody is sung monophonically, in Tài tử music the same melody is performed with its elaborated variations and expressive techniques by various Vietnamese instruments, both as a solo or ensemble piece. Furthermore, while Lý vocal techniques have not been well documented, the detailed descriptions of the Tài tử instrumental techniques are useful in the compositional process.

3.1.2 Compositional process

The creative works with influences from folk songs and Tài tử music are an endeavour to explore a convincing marriage between Vietnamese traditional music and Western styles. A hundred years earlier Bartók had a greater ambition: “Kodaly and I wanted to make a synthesis of East and West” (Moreux 1953, 92). One of the biggest challenges of the synthesis is that folk melodies are already “in their small way, they are as perfect as the grandest masterpieces of musical art” (Nketia 1982, 88). Any addition to “grandest masterpieces of musical art” appears to be redundant. During the compositional process, there were countless hours of exploration with unsuccessful results to achieve a final outcome. Each composition inspired by folk songs and Tài tử

¹⁰ Examples: *Lý con sáo*, *Lý ngựa ô*, *Lý Huế*, *Lý giao duyên*, *Lý Thập tình*, *Lý giao duyên*, *Lý sâm thương*, *Lý chuồn chuồn*, etc.

music in this thesis is a unique synthesis between a Vietnamese folk song and various Western styles.

The first step in my compositional process was a musical analysis to identify the Vietnamese musical characteristics, social and regional contexts, metaphors, and language features of each selected folk song. Learning to sing was an essential part in the compositional process to gain knowledge and ‘feel’ of each folk song’s melodic contour and its “individual peculiarity” (Moreux 1953, 244). This ethnomusicological analysis informs and sets the appropriate compositional strategy for each creative work. As Euba stated, this transformation process is “difficult to describe” and “probably what Bartók meant when he described the compositional process as a “miracle”.” (Euba 2014, 5).

Bartók’s first principle “melody unchanged or slightly varied” (Moreux 1953, 239) was used as the first point of reference in my method of interweaving Vietnamese melodies with Western styles. In most cases, the complete original folk song is preserved and often transposed to a different key reflecting Vietnamese tonic shifts, normally to the fourth degree above. In the aspect of pitch, variations of the original melody are made using Western compositional techniques including altering the melodic intervals, melodic fragmentation (only certain parts of the melody are used); and combining Vietnamese pitch structures with Western scales. In the aspect of rhythm, Western compositional methods of augmentation and diminution are used to make melodic variations by increasing and decreasing the note values of the original Vietnamese melody. On the other hand, rhythmic features of the original melody are usually employed in the accompaniment part which also at times includes melodic directions influenced by the Vietnamese tonal language.

On the practice of writing the accompaniment part, Bartók highlights one extreme that considers the accompaniment parts as “only serve as an ornamental setting”, and another extreme that perceives that “the melody only serves as a “motto” while that which is built around it is of real importance” (Moreux 1953, 240). He advises to have a balanced interrelationship between the folk song and the accompaniment:

the greatest importance that the musical qualities of the setting should be derived from the musical qualities of the melody from such characteristics as are contained in it openly or covertly, so that melody and all additions create the impression of complete unity (Moreux 1953, 240)

My compositional process is an endeavour to explore a balanced musical unity between Vietnamese melodies and Western styles in line with Bartók’s principle of folk song harmonisation. My accompaniment writing aims to follow the melodic development; at times it is unresolved, instead of forcing the melodic contour into any harmonic framework. Each Vietnamese folk song has been weaved into various Western genres, and the most appropriate harmonic style was used for the final outcome.

In terms of structure, my compositions with influences from Vietnamese folk songs and Tài tử music use Bartók’s principle “write an accompaniment part, possibly some opening and concluding phrases” (Moreux 1953, 239) as a point of departure. Most of my compositions have an opening section comprising material from the original Vietnamese melody, and/or the new combined scales, and/or also from the accompaniment parts. There are bridging phrases between the repeats or transpositions and a coda also often contains materials from the original Vietnamese melody. Vietnamese structure and texture are incorporated in some compositions in which the complete original folk song is preserved, followed by its elaborate versions with varied

or contrasting accompaniment. This structure reflects the non-developmental characterisation of Tài tử music and other Vietnamese genres.

The experimental phase in the compositional process involved the exploration to find the most appropriate key and registers for the complete melody, or parts of it, and the accompaniment that can be played with standard guitar tuning 'E A D G B E'. In this phase, *Sunset* and *Fantasia* are the successful compositions with standard tuning. The experimental process with the commonly used tuning system 'D A D G B E', in which the sixth string is tuned down to D, has brought about two compositions *Song of the Moon* and *Song of the South*. Unsuccessful results with standard guitar tuning were solved by exploring and using various scordaturas. This solution allowed the creation of a new compositional medium that accommodated Vietnamese folk tunes and the accompaniment. A new scordatura 'D G D G A D' is used for *White Bird* which is based on the folk song 'Cò lả'. Another scordatura 'E G sharp D G C E' was gradually invented for *Song of the Nightingale* which accommodates Western whole-tone scale and the folk song 'Lý chim quyên'.

In this experimental phase, appropriate guitar compositional idioms and extended techniques are used to achieve compositional strategies. For example, string choice and chord position were used to maintain tone colour consistency and layer contrast, also *klangfarbenmelodie* effect. The range of pitch is extended with guitar harmonics which also create novel effects and contrasting tone colours; and also the possibility to assign the original melody and the accompaniment parts to different registers. Other guitar techniques including vibrato, glissando, hammer-on and pull-off techniques are employed to depict Vietnamese tonal language and vocal techniques, instrumental methods of articulation; and also the social-cultural contexts embedded in the lyrics and melody of the selected folk songs.

3.1.3.i Song of the South

This composition is based on the Vietnamese folk song *Lý con sáo*. According to Lư Nhất Vũ, *Lý con sáo* is a special phenomenon in Vietnamese traditional music, with more than forty different versions originating from various regions of Vietnam (Lư 2006, 36-44). The relationship between *Lý* songs and *Tài tử* music has been discussed earlier in this chapter with *Lý* also being considered instrumental repertoire. This creative work is based on the *Lý con sáo* version in Lư Nhất Vũ's collection of *Lý* folk songs (figure 36) (Lư 2006) and another version of a piano adaptation by Phạm Duy (figure 44) (Phạm 1969).

Figure 36: *Lý con sáo* (Lư 2006, 262)

Chậm - Buồn

Ai dem con sáo sang sông. Ai
 Ai cho con sáo ăn cơm Ai
 Ai mua con sáo trong tranh Ai

dem con sáo sang sông Cho sáo sổ lồng
 cho con sáo ăn cơm Cho sáo rửa mồm
 mua con sáo trong tranh. Cho sáo trên cành

Cho sáo sổ lồng Sổ lồng bay xa con sáo xa bay
 Cho sáo rửa mồm Rửa mồm cho nhanh con sáo nhanh cho
 Cho sáo trên cành Đâu cành cây sao cao sáo cao trên

xa Sổ lồng bay xa con sáo bay bay xa.
 nhanh Rửa mồm cho nhanh con sáo nhanh cho nhanh.
 cao Đâu cành cây cao con sáo cao trên cao.

Cultural context and musical analysis

The study into the Vietnamese folk song has shown that *Lý con sáo* is based on a folk poem with a couplet of a six syllable phrase and an eight syllable phrase:

<i>Ai đem con sáo sang sông</i>	Who let the hill myna cross the river
<i>Để cho con sáo xổ lồng bay xa</i>	So the hill myna came out of its cage flying away

Figure 37: *Lý con sáo* six-eight folk poem

	Ai	đem	con	sáo	sang	sông
Syllable	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Để	cho	con	sáo	xổ	lồng	bay	xa
Syllable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Based on the original six-eight folk poem, extra words/syllables are added to form musical phrases of four bar length. The added texts include repeated words, new words, and nonsense syllables. Original texts also can be deleted. There are many different versions which change the melodic structure of the song. The two versions by Lư Nhất Vũ and Phạm Duy have a similar melody with small lyric variations.

Lư Nhất Vũ's version (the added texts are in **bold**):

1. Ai (**i i i**) đem con sáo sang (**sang**) sông
2. Để cho (~~con~~) sáo xổ lồng (**cho nó xổ lồng**)
3. (**xổ lồng**) bay xa (**con sáo xa bay xa**)
4. (**xổ lồng bay xa**) (**con sáo xa bay xa**)

Phạm Duy's version (the added texts are in **bold**):

1. Ai (**i i i**) đem con sáo (**sáo**) sang sông
2. ~~Đề~~ cho (~~con sáo~~) (**nó**) xỏ lông (**cho nó xỏ lông**)
3. (**xỏ lông**) bay xa (**con sáo bay bay xa**)
4. (**xỏ lông bay xa**) (**con sáo bay bay xa**)

With the added words/syllables, the folk song comprises musical phrases of four bars; each phrase is either ten or eleven pitches:

	Ai	i	i	i	đem	con	sáo	sáo	sang	sông
Pitch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

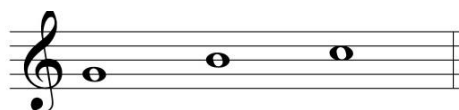
	Cho	nó	xỏ	ô	lông	cho	nó	xỏ	ô	lông
Pitch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

	Xỏ	lông	bay	xa	con	sáo	bay	i	bay	i	xa
Pitch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

	Xỏ	lông	bay	xa	con	sáo	bay	i	bay	i	xa
Pitch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

From a Western analytical perspective, Lư Nhất Vũ's score gives an impression of the G major key while Pham Duy's arrangement is certainly in the key of C major with the accompaniment using functional Western harmony. My ethnomusicological study demonstrates that this is not the case. The melodic structure is normally a combination of two different anhemitonic – pentatonic modes. However, according to Lư Nhất Vũ, this version of *Lý con sáo* has a typical melodic structure with the use of a semitone at the beginning and/or ending, which is also featured in more than twenty other versions (figure 38) (Lư 2006, 36-44).

Figure 38: Typical melodic structures



The process to arrange this folksong for the guitar in the key of C as per Pham Duy's version, and the key of G as per Lư Nhất Vũ's version, highlighted many challenges and resulted in a more guitar friendly version in the key of D, with the sixth string tuned down from E to D (figure 39). In January 2012, during the preparation for the performance in collaboration with the Vietnamese Orchestra of Traditional Musical Instruments at the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music, a new understanding became apparent; that there is no semitone in the instrumental version of this folk song. A tone was used for the last quaver of bar 9 and bar 11 in the instrumental version instead of the semitone in both vocal versions by Pham (C - B natural - C) (figure 44) and Lư (G - F sharp - G) (figure 36).

Figure 39: Instrumental version used with the HCMC Orchestra of Vietnamese music instruments



The instrumental version fits the Vietnamese principles of pitch organisation, whereby the melodic structure is actually a combination of two different anhemitonic – pentatonic modes A 'Xuân' (figure 40) and A 'Oán' (figure 41). Bar one to four is based on the A 'Xuân' mode; the mode change to A 'Oán' occurs at bar five (figure 39). The folk song ends with a tonic shift to D, which is common in Lý songs (Lư 2006). This combination of modes creates a heptatonic structure of G A B flat C D E and F.

Figure 40: A ‘Xuân’ pentatonic

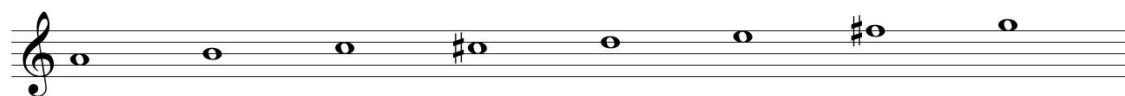


Figure 41: A ‘Oán’ mode



I have decided to incorporate both the semitone of the vocal version and the tone of the instrumental version of *Lý con sáo* to reflect the informed knowledge gathered by both archival and observation-participation research. The combination of the two modes A ‘Xuân’ and A ‘Oán’, plus the semitone variation from the vocal version, gives the melody a new octatonic pitch structure (figure 42):

Figure 42: Octatonic structure



This octatonic structure could be reorganised as the D major scale with a C natural (figure 43):

Figure 43: D octatonic



The process of writing the accompaniment for *Lý con sáo* and other Vietnamese folk songs took guidance from Béla Bartók’s method mentioned in previous chapters. Most importantly, “we must penetrate into it, feel it, and bring it out in sharp contours by the appropriate setting” (Moreux 1953, 244) ; and “bring out the melody most clearly by building round it harmonies of the widest range” (Moreux 1953, 241). Bartók rejected the practice of forcing folk tunes into simple Western functional harmonisation which still existed during his time:

I have to mention a strange notion widespread some thirty or forty years ago. Most trained and good musicians then believed that only simple harmonizations were well suited to folk tunes. And even worse, by simple harmonies they meant a succession of triads of tonic, dominant and possibly subdominant” (Moreux 1953, 240).

Accidentally, this “strange notion” has also been widespread amongst many Vietnamese ‘trained and good musicians’ until even now. It was also the reason why during my younger years in Vietnam, I was not attracted to Vietnamese traditional music which was heavily ‘modernised’ by urban rock bands. Phạm Duy’s arrangement of the Vietnamese folk song *Lý con sáo* is an example of the simple harmonisation (figure 44). His piano adaptation applied simple Western functional harmony for the folk song. The melodic structure is forced to conform within the C major tonality with triads of the tonic, dominant, subdominant and an occasion of super-tonic.

Figure 44: Phạm Duy's piano adaptation (Phạm 1969)

The musical score is for a piano adaptation of the Vietnamese folk song *Lý con sáo*. It is written in 2/4 time and C major. The score consists of two systems. The first system includes the lyrics: "1). AI - DEM - CON SÁO - SÁO SANG SÔNG? QUI POR-TE CE MER-LE A TRA-VERS LE COU-RANT? WHO BROUGHT THE BLACK BIRD ACROSS THE RI-VER?". The second system includes the lyrics: "CHO NÓ XÔ LÔNG CHO NÓ XÔ LÔNG XÔ LÔNG BAY L'OL-SEAU DANS SA CA-GE L'OL-SEAU DANS SA CA-GE BRI-SANT LA SO HE BROKE HIS CAGE SO HE BROKE HIS CAGE FLYING AWAY". The piano accompaniment features simple triads of the tonic, dominant, and subdominant, as well as an occasion of super-tonic.

Based on the knowledge that the melody of *Lý con sáo* is a combination of A ‘Xuân’ and A ‘Oán’, my first compositional approach was to explore the accompaniment with the A tonic. This version follows the contour of the melody and has a ‘minor feel’ which is in contrast with Phạm Duy’s strong major tonality. An example of the exploration is shown in figure 45 with chord progressions in the key of A minor.

Figure 45: A minor tonality

Am G | Em | C Em | Am | D | Am | D | Am

Am | D Am | D/A | D | Am | D Am | D/A | D

Even though this exploration already makes an original contribution by highlighting that the melody could be harmonised either in major or minor tonality, it is only another example of simple Western harmonisation. The process to explore “harmonies of the widest range” for the melody of *Lý con sáo* aims to illustrate the bi-tonal possibility of the accompaniment. In doing so, four sets of chord palettes, including A minor and borrowed chords from A major; with D major and borrowed chords from D minor, were used to find common chords between the two tonics. The exploration has also expanded further with seventh and ninth chords of the four chord palettes. It was found that the common chords between the A and the D tonics are B minor, C major, E minor, and F major (in **bold**):

A minor tonality chord palette

Main chords	Am	Bdim	C	Dm	Em	F	G
Borrowed chords	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m	G#m

D major tonality chord palette

Main chords	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#dim
Borrowed chords:	Dm	Edim	F	Gm	Am	B flat	C

After several explorations, the final chord progression of the tonic D major is combined with the A minor chord progression to find a possible unity. The melody is ‘penetrated’ and moves smoothly between the two major and minor centres via the common chords. At bar nine, the first inversion of D minor seventh is used to reflect the melodic variation of the instrumental version; then at bar eleven the D major is used to support the semitone of the vocal version. In this harmonic structure, the chord B flat major seventh is used to replace the B minor to give a chromatic colour to the accompaniment. The harmonic relationship suggesting a bi-tonal character between A minor and D major is shown in the diagram in figure 46, and the final harmonic progression in figure 47.

Figure 46: Harmonic structure of *Song of the South*

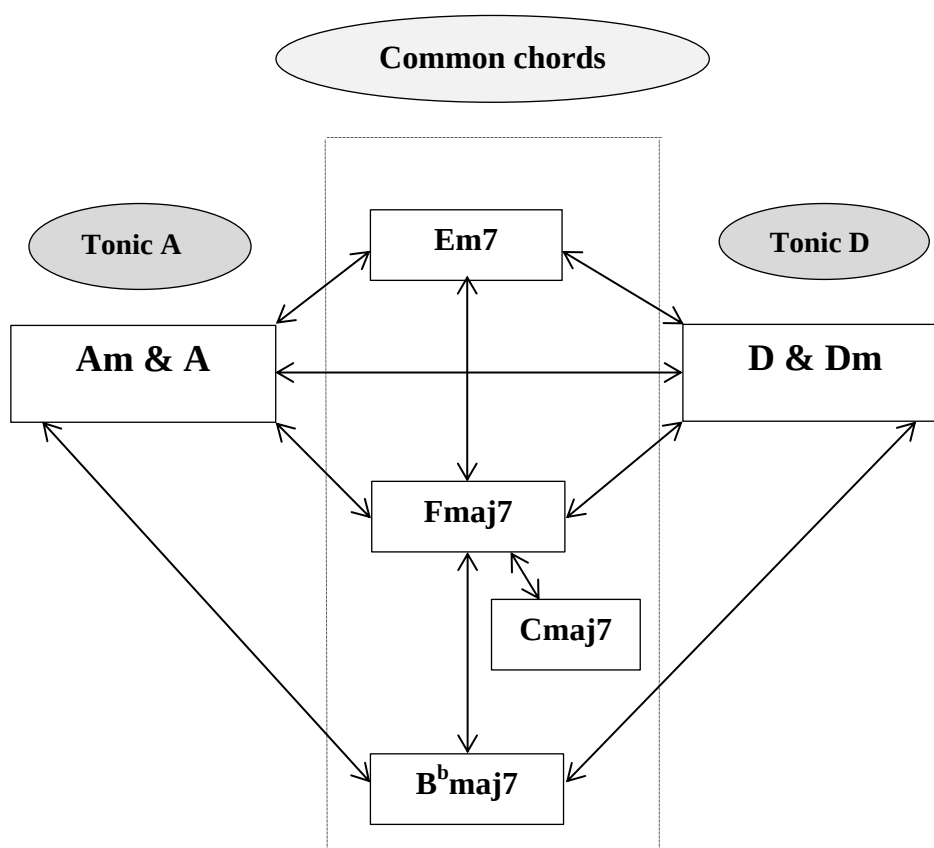


Figure 47: Harmonic progression

Fmaj7 | Em7 | Am7 | B^bmaj7 | Fmaj7 | Cmaj7 | Fmaj7 | Cmaj7

Dm7/F | B^bmaj7 | D/A | D | Dm7/F | B^bmaj7 | D/A | D

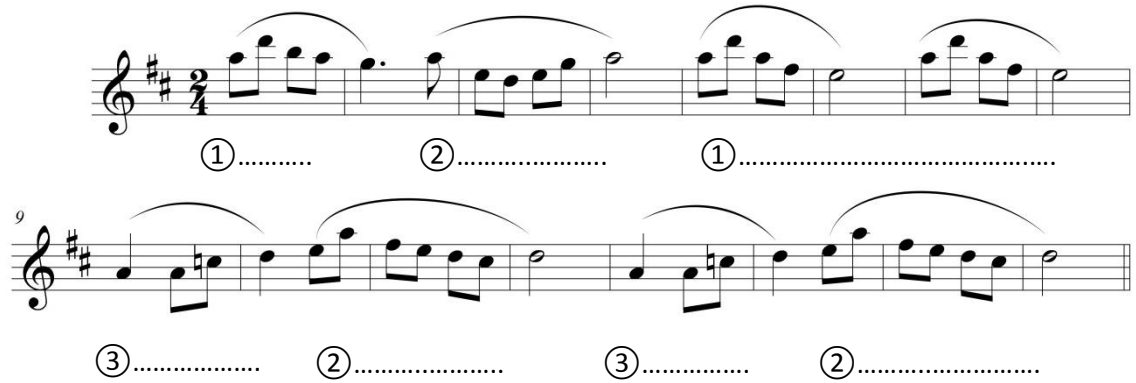
Guitar as the expressive medium

The compositional strategy for *Song of the South* was simultaneously tested and refined, together with the process of exploring the musical-technical possibilities of the guitar as the expressive medium. Compositional ideas were informed by experimental research, to see whether they were playable options on the guitar. This process brings together the knowledge of ethnomusicology, composition and performance practice.

String choice

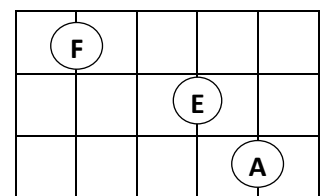
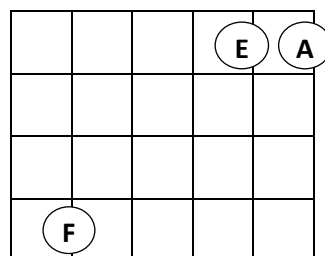
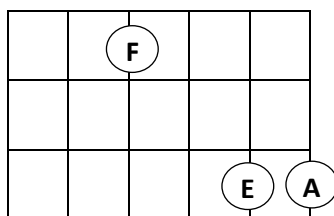
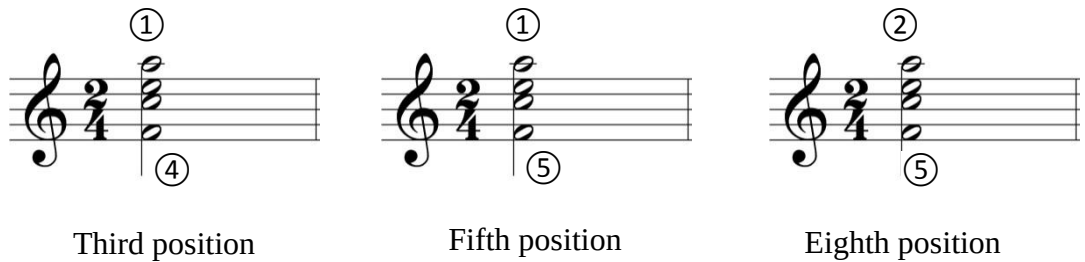
On the guitar, there are options to assign the melody on different strings to achieve the desired tone colour, fingering and playability. However, string choice for melody is affected by choice of chord position (which will be discussed later). In this composition, the original melody was transposed an octave higher with lower supporting layers. For tone colour consistency and voicing in *Song of the South*, it is desirable to have the first musical phrase on the first string; the second phrase on the second string; the third and fourth phrases on the first string; the fifth and seventh phrases on the third string; and the sixth and eighth phrases on the second string (figure 48).

Figure 48: String choice



Choice of chord position: While harmonic support attempts to ‘penetrate’ the development of the melody with the choice of possible guitar chords, it is not always possible to keep both the melodic string choice and chord position. For instance, in the harmonic progression from F major seventh to E minor seventh (figure 50), there are three chord positions for the chord F major seventh on the first bar of *Song of the South*, which contain the pitch A of the melody (figure 49).

Figure 49: F major seventh on third, fifth, and eighth positions



Naturally, the first choice would be either the third or fifth position where the pitch A of the melody is on the fifth fret of the first string. However, it will be physically impossible to reach the next pitch D of the melody which is on the tenth fret of the first string. Therefore the chord choice in this situation is the eighth position, which also affects the choice of the next chord position. The E minor seventh has two positions available; however the seventh position (figure 52) fits both the string choice of the melody (on the second string) and it is much closer than the second position (figure 51).

Figure 50: Harmonic progression Fmaj7 to Em7

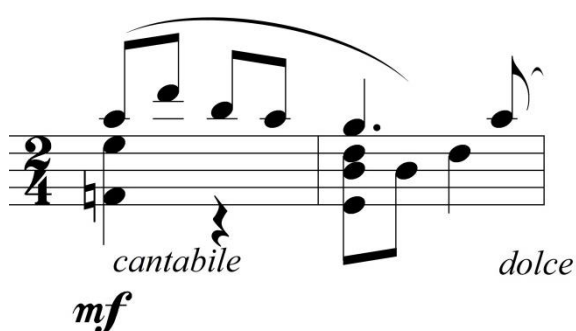


Figure 51: Em7 on third position

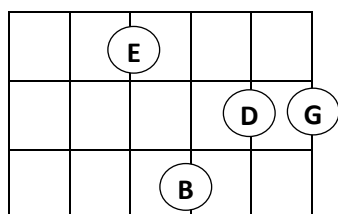
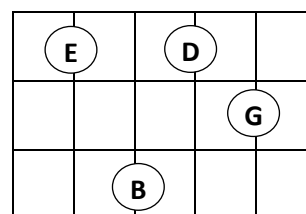


Figure 52: Em7 on seventh position



At times, chord choice and string choice are both technically and musically possible. Musically, the progression A minor seventh (figure 54) moving to the B flat major seventh (figure 55), attempts to add a chromatic flavour to the harmonization while also expressing the feeling of ‘crossing the river’ described in the lyrics of the folk song (figure 53). Technically, the two chords are very close to support the melody on the second string.

Figure 53: ‘Crossing the river’

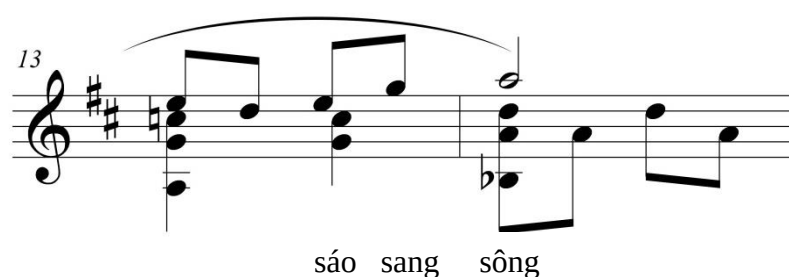


Figure 54: Am7 on fifth position

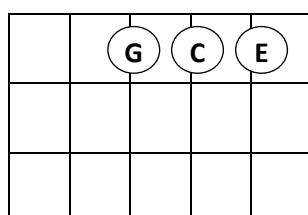
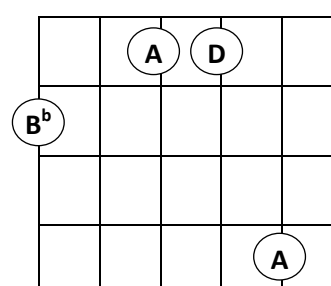


Figure 55: Bbmaj7 on seventh position



The use of natural harmonics

In the compositional process of *Song of the South*, the exploration of the guitar's natural harmonics aims to extend the pitch range, to assign contrasting tone colours in the melody, and also to give novel effects both in the musical and performance aspects. In standard tuning with sixth string tuned to D, the Vietnamese A pentatonic mode 'A B D E F sharp' is playable as natural harmonics on the seventh, ninth and twelfth frets.¹¹ On the same frets, the entire D major scale is playable with natural harmonics with one octave and a major third.¹²

¹¹ Lower D on the twelfth fret of sixth string is also a natural harmonic but not used in this work.

¹² Similarly, lower D is not used. To show the ascending pattern of the scale D major, the lower pitch A is not shown in figure 57.

Figure 56: Vietnamese pentatonic scale playable as natural harmonics

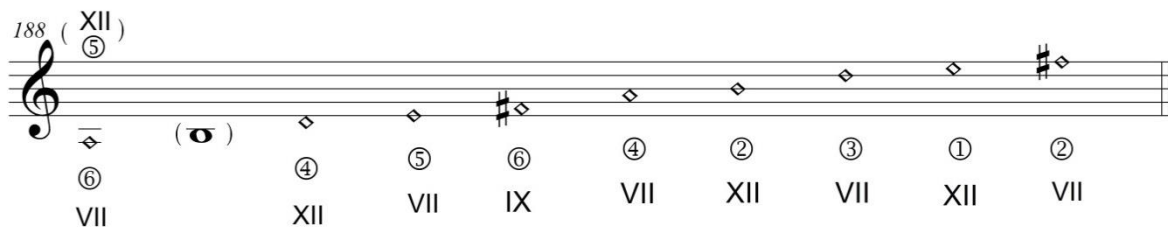
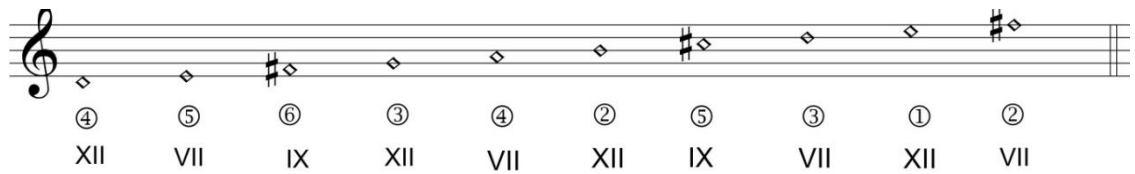


Figure 57: Natural harmonics in D major scale



While on the stave the two natural harmonic scales look quite normal in an ascending pattern; in practice the note positions spread over the seventh, ninth and twelfth frets of the guitar. Figure 58 and 59 illustrate the location of the natural harmonics on the guitar and how the ascending patterns require crosses and jumps (the coloured positions are an octave higher). This characterisation was used to create an ambience of space and also a ‘flying’ effect in the opening section of *Song of the South*.

Figure 58: D major with natural harmonics

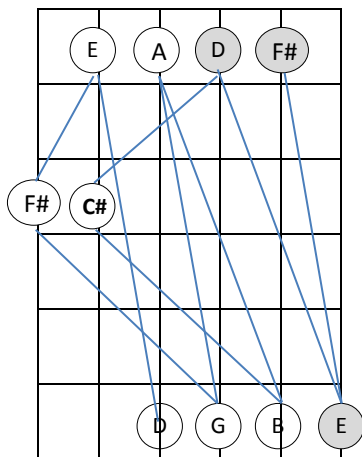
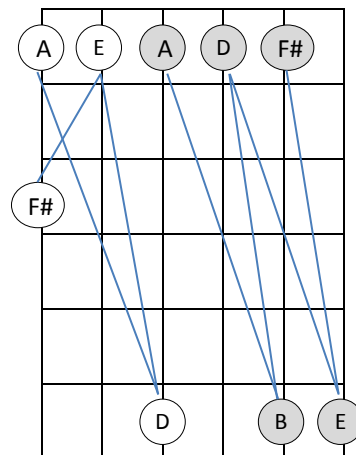
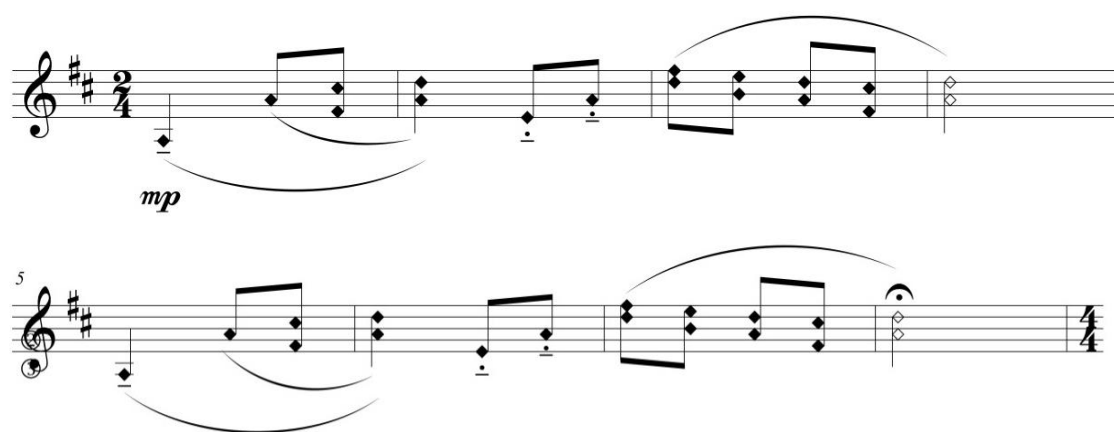


Figure 59: A pentatonic with natural harmonics



The opening section is entirely in natural harmonics which combine the typically melodic ending of the vocal version of *Lý con sáo* in D major scale with a counter-melody layer in Vietnamese A pentatonic scale (figure 60). This arrangement at times projects parallel fourths suggesting an Eastern flavour.

Figure 60: Opening section of *Song of the South*



Summary

This section has documented the compositional process of *Song of the South*. Weaving *Lý con sáo* with Western bi-tonal harmonic structure, this creative work makes an original contribution and is the first of its kind. Knowledge of Vietnamese folk songs in general, the *Lý* repertoire in particular, and the instrumental version of *Tài tử* music have informed the development and final creative outcomes. The marriage between a Vietnamese folk song and Western styles is a synthesis of ethnomusicological research and composition with extensive experimental research on the musical-technical possibilities of the guitar.

3.1.3.ii Song of the Nightingale *Homage to Debussy*

As a composer, Bartók admired Debussy's art of harmonisation. He wrote: "Debussy's great service to music was to reawaken among all musicians an awareness of harmony and its possibilities" (Moreux 1953, 92). In the process of my research, I encountered the hypothesis that Debussy could have used Vietnamese elements in his piano music (Schmitz 1995). *Song of the Nightingale* is dedicated to Debussy, the first major composer with Vietnamese influences. Based on the folk song *Lý chim quyên*, this creative work attempts to weave Southern Vietnamese pitch and rhythmic materials with Debussy's whole-tone scale and harmonic ideas.

Cultural-musical contexts and compositional strategy

While *Lý con sáo* has more than forty different melodies, my research has found that there is mainly one melody of *Lý chim quyên*. The folk song is also based on a folk poem couplet of six and eight words:

	Chim	quyên	ăn	trái	nhãn	lồng
Syllable	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Thia	lia	quen	chậu	vợ	chồng	quen	hơi
Syllable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Chim quyên ăn trái nhãn lồng

Thia lia quen chậu vợ chồng quen hơi

The nightingale eats the longan ¹³

The fighting fish is accustomed to its pot

The husband and wife are accustomed to each other's scent

¹³ English translations "nhãn lồng" as "yellow berries" (P. T. Nguyen 1994) and "lichen" (Phạm 1969) are incorrect.

The three collected versions (figures 62, 63, and 64) have the same melodic structure with some pitch variations which occur mainly on word embellishments. Version two includes the instrumental part for the Vietnamese zither (figure 63). While the folk poem *Lý con sáo* has been developed into various phrase lengths with diverse melodies; *Lý chim quyên* exists in one melodic structure which has a close relationship with pitch level and contour of Southern Vietnamese language (figure 61).

Figure 61: Pitch direction

→	→	↘	→	↗	→
Chim	quyên	(quây)	ăn	trái	(quây)
↗	↗	↘	↗	↗	↘
Nhân	(nhân)	lòng	nhân	(nhân)	lòng
→	→	↘	↘	→	
(Ơ	con	bạn	mình	ơi	
→	→	↘	↘	→	
(Ơ	con	bạn	mình	ơi	

Figure 62: *Lý chim quyên 1* (D. Phạm 1990, 40)

The musical score consists of two staves. The first staff has a melody in 2/4 time, with lyrics in Vietnamese and English below it. The second staff continues the melody with more lyrics.

Staff 1:

Chim khuyên guây Ăn trái guây Nhãn.... lòng ự Nhãn....
 Thìa lia guây Quen chầu guây Vợ..... chồng ự Vợ....

Staff 2:

lòng ơ con bạn mình đi!
 chồng ơ con bạn quên hơi.

Figure 63: *Lý chim quỳên 2* (P. T. Nguyen 1994, 54)

Đàn tranh

Chim quỳên quây ăn trái quây nhẵn nhẵn
(Tseem weeng way-ee ahng try-ee way-ee nyang nyang)

T = Thumb
I = Index finger
M = Middle finger

T T T T I M T T T T T M T I T T T

Chorus:

lồng nhẵn nhẵn lồng Ó con bạn mình ơi Ó con bạn mình
lohng -oo nyang nyang lohng- oo Er korn bahng ming oy Er korn bahng ming

T I I T T T I T T I T I I I T T T I T I I I

Figure 64: *Lý chim quỳên 3* (Lư 2006, 220)

Con chim quỳên quây ăn trái quây

nhẵn nhẵn lồng ơi cô bạn mình ơi!

Con thia thia quây quen chầu quây

Vợ vợ chồng ơi cô bạn quen

hơi ơi cô bạn quen hơi.

It is notable that the Vietnamese hexatonic structure used in this song is comparable to the Western G Dorian mode without the second interval (figure 65). Based on my ethnomusicological research, I have discovered that the pitch structure is a combination of two different anhemitonic – pentatonic modes G ‘Xuân’ (figure 66) and G ‘Oán’ (figure 67). The song starts with ‘Oán’ mode then shifts to ‘Xuân’ mode on bar nine in version one (figure 62), bar eight in version two figure 63), and bar seven in version three (figure 64). Pham Duy’s version contains a semitone (bar six) instead of a tone in other versions (figure 62). Once again, my performance of the instrumental version with the Vietnamese orchestra in 2012 confirmed that it was a tone.

Figure 65: Hexatonic pitch structure



Figure 66: G ‘Xuân’ pentatonic



Figure 67: G ‘Oán’ pentatonic



In the compositional process, the entire folk song was preserved and transposed a semitone up to G sharp hexatonic scale in the first section (figure 68). At various points in the creative work, parts of the melody are transformed from Vietnamese modes to whole-tone scales by altering the intervals of the original melody. At times, the melody shifts between the Vietnamese modes and whole-tone scale (figure 69).

Figure 68: G sharp hexatonic



Figure 69: Example of melody transformed into whole tone scale

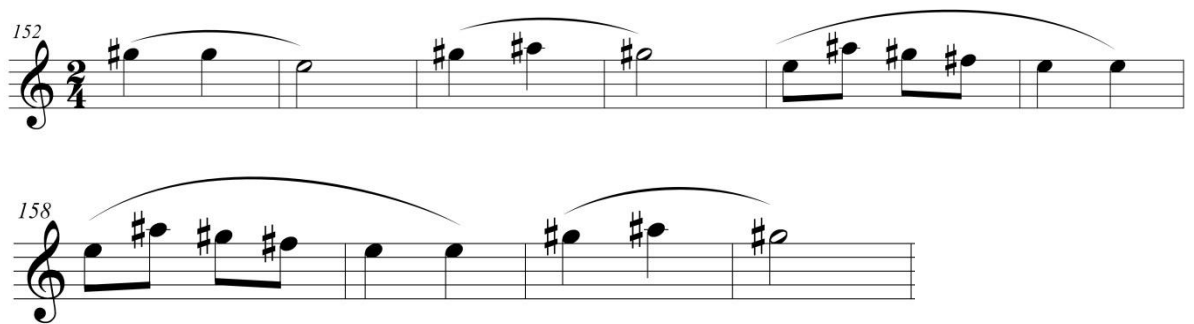
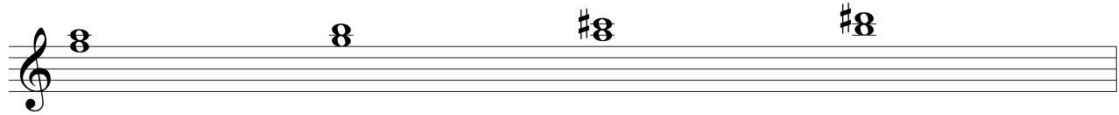


Figure 72: F whole-tone scale



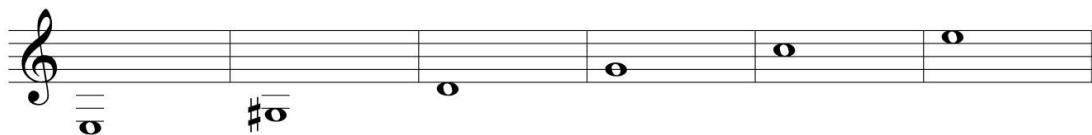
Figure 73: Major thirds in F whole-tone scale



Guitar as the expressive medium

The process of weaving whole-tone style together with Vietnamese materials of *Lý chim quỳên* required extensive experimental research on the guitar. Final outcomes were gradually achieved using a scordatura which transformed the guitar as a new expressive medium for the task. The second string is tuned up to C to combine with the open first string E for harmonic support (figure 74). This allows the parallel major thirds to be playable on both open strings and on the same frets. The fifth string is tuned down to G sharp to use as the bass layer to support the melodic line in the G sharp scale.

Figure 74: Scordatura ‘E G# D G C E’



In the first section, the original melody of the G hexatonic is assigned on the third string which allows the entire melody to be playable with appropriate expressive techniques. Glissando is used instead of hammer-on and pull-off techniques to demonstrate Vietnamese melisma and slurs. The major thirds are playable on the second and first strings (figure 77). The vertical combination produces augmented triads and triads containing tri-tone and a major third as shown in figures 75 and 76.

Figure 75: Augmented triads



Figure 76: Triads with tritone plus a major third

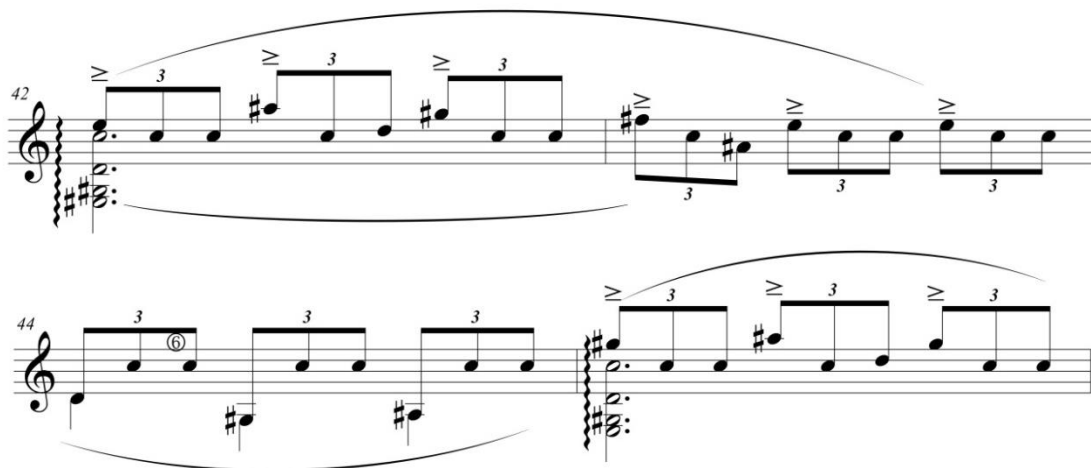


Figure 77: Melody on third string; accompaniment on first and second strings



At bar 42, the transformed melody into whole-tone structure is assigned to the first string to achieve a different tone colour. With the G sharp open string, a counter melody is sustainable on three bass strings creating a whole-tone ambience (bar 44). This is not possible in standard tuning (figure 78).

Figure 78: Whole-tone ambience



Even though it is influenced by Western musical structure ‘theme and variations’, my compositional approach is based on the Vietnamese practice of imitation and elaboration of materials. This approach creates a different exploration of the various tone colours of the guitar to express the fundamental melodic ideas. The exploration of natural harmonics in the new scordatura opens up unprecedented opportunities to contrast tone colour in both the melody and the accompaniment by using various registers on the guitar. The introduction, two variations of the folk song and the ending, are possible based on the combination of existing harmonics with the new harmonics on the G sharp and C strings. The opening phrase reflects the exploration of natural harmonics on the seventh fret and twelfth fret in the new scordatura.

Figure 79: Introduction

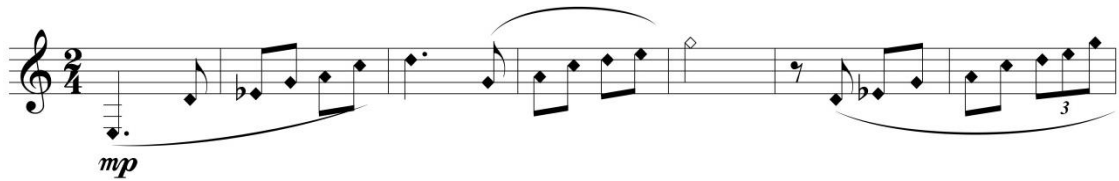


Figure 80: New harmonics on G# and C strings

C		E
G#		C
D#		G
C		E
G#		C

B	D#	A	D	G	B
E	G#	D	G	C	E

Figure 81: Harmonics used in the Introduction

The harmonics on the seventh and twelfth frets are used again in two contrasting layers from bar 51. The main melody is on the three bass strings and another layer is on the three treble strings. The lower harmonics are employed for fragments of the folk song, fluctuating between Vietnamese and whole-tone scales (figure 82). The upper harmonic layer forms an ascending counter melody in the C major scale. At bar 58, the melody is transposed an octave higher on the new harmonics on the fourth, fifth, and seventh frets (figure 83).¹⁴ Meanwhile, the three-note motive on the treble strings is an octave lower with normal guitar sounds in a fast repetitive pattern suggesting a whole-tone ambience.

Figure 82: Main melody assigned to the bass strings

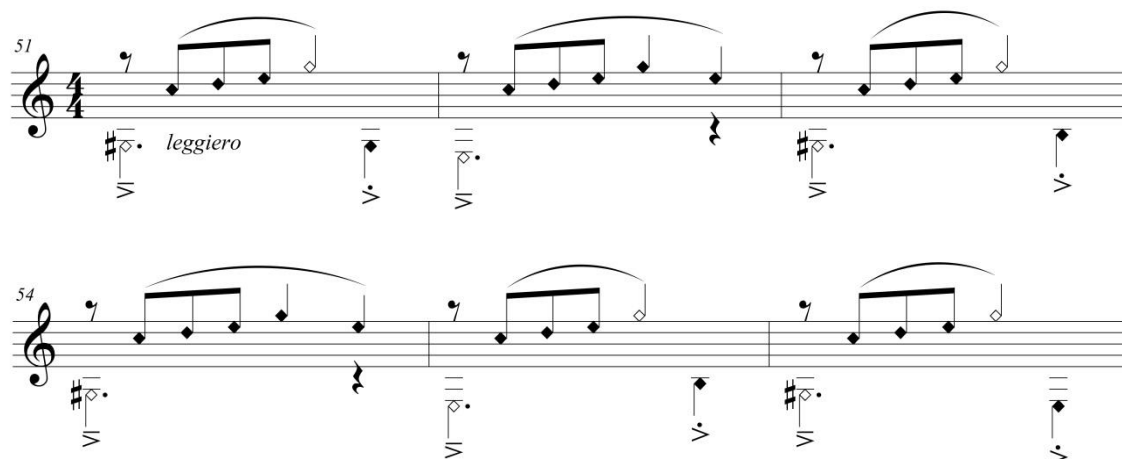


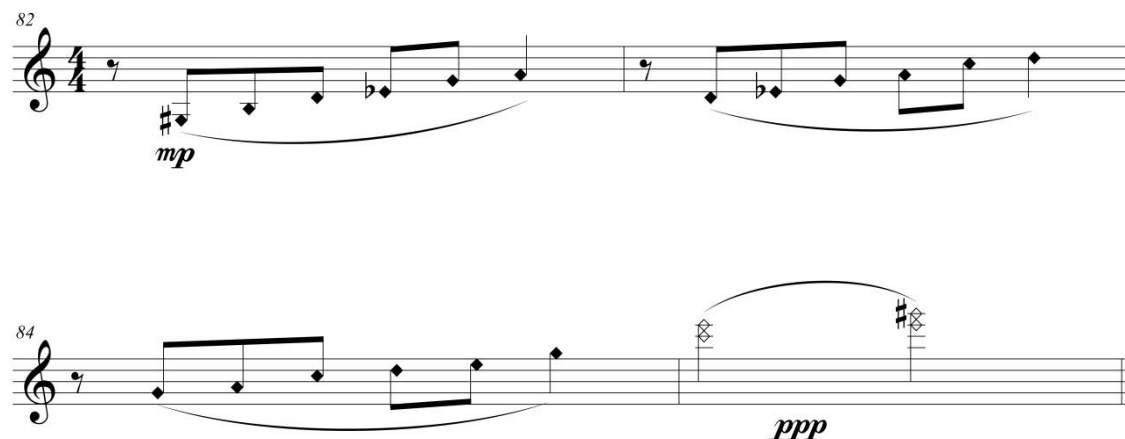
Figure 83: Melody assigned to natural harmonics on the 4th, 5th, and 7th frets



¹⁴ Harmonics sound an octave higher than written.

The concluding phrase contains materials both from Vietnamese and whole-tone scales ascending with natural harmonics of the new scordatura to end with the highest pitches on the guitar (figure 84).

Figure 84: Coda



Summary

This section has documented the compositional process of *Song of the Nightingale*. Once again, ethnomusicological knowledge has informed the development and the final creative outcomes. The unique synthesis of weaving the Vietnamese folk song *Lý Chim Quyên* with the whole-tone style has made an original contribution to new musical-technical possibilities arising from a new scordatura. They include string choice, layers of sounds, contrasting tone colours and registers achievable by natural harmonics.

3.1.3.iii Other compositions with influences from folk songs and Tài tử music

The compositional process of other compositions with influences from folk songs and Tài tử music are also similar to the development of *Song of the South* and *Song of the Nightingale*. Each composition is a unique outcome which makes original contributions using the synthesis between Vietnamese material and Western styles. In this process,

the exploration of new scordaturas has also made contributions to the guitar's musical and technical possibilities.

Fantasia is based on the folk song 'Trống cơm' (the rice drum) from North Vietnam (figure 85). Written in standard tuning, *Fantasia* has a strong tendency towards Western functional tonality. In the first section, the opening phrase reflects the exploration of percussive effect by using the staccato notes and the natural harmonics an octave higher on the same frets of the fourth and third strings (figure 86). The melody is mainly on the second string with a counter-melody on the third string in the A pentatonic mode. In the second section, the melody is transposed up to A where the percussive effect is now performed on the fifth and sixth strings.

Figure 85: 'Trống cơm' (Lâm 2005, 220)



Figure 86: Percussive effects



White Bird is based on the folk song 'Cò lả' (the hovering egret) of the 'Quan họ Bắc ninh' repertoire from North Vietnam (figure 87). While this tune is perceived to be in

the major key, my strategy was to demonstrate that both minor and major harmonization is achievable. With a new tuning system ‘D G D G A D’, part of the folk song is playable on the natural harmonics of the seventh, ninth and twelfth frets, which were used for the introduction and bridging phrases.

Figure 87: ‘Cò lả’ (Xuân 2007, 24)



In the first section, with its sense of major tonality, the entire melody is consistently performed on the first D string with a supporting lower layer on the second and third strings. Both ascending and descending glissando techniques are used extensively, mimicking the Vietnamese technique ‘vuốt’ to capture embellished vocal pitch slides and melodic directions associated with Northern Vietnamese language. The second section is in the D minor key, exploring exotic guitar chords, with open strings supporting the pentatonic melody which is now an octave lower and spreading over three treble strings. The harmonic progression penetrates the melodic line through to the end, with a shift to a tonic of G.

Song of the Moon is based on the folk song *Hát hội Trăng rằm* (song of the full moon festival) (figure 89), also known as *Lý cây đa* (song of the banyan tree) (figure 88) from North Vietnam. This creative work explores the ‘impressionist’ harmonic style, weaving together with the Vietnamese pentatonic style. The introduction is a melodic

fragmentation of the folk song, playable with natural harmonics in sixth intervals. At times, the melody is accompanied by a parallel fifth below which gives a hint of Eastern sonority. Rhythmic augmentation and diminution, and melodic fragmentation of the original melody, are assigned on different registers and tone colours to suggest miniature orchestration.

Figure 88: ‘Lý cây đa’ (Lâm 2005, 135)

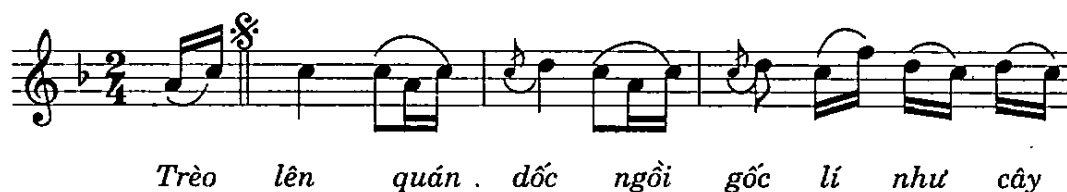


Figure 89: ‘Hát hội Trăng rằm’ (Phạm 1969)



Sunset is based on the folk song ‘Lý chiều chiều’. There are several versions with different titles and lyrics such as ‘Lý ngô đồng’, ‘Lý chuồn chuồn’ (figure 90), and ‘Lý ngoài mưa’ (figure 91). This folk song has been used in the *Tài tử* instrumental repertoire and later in *Cải lương* theatrical music. This creative work is a successful exploration using standard guitar tuning.

The harmonisation contains diatonic chords and at times a hint of whole-tone styles to capture the ethos of the mode ‘Oán’ and the tranquillity of the Mekong Delta landscapes. Similar to *White Bird*, the glissando technique is used to capture vocal embellishments and melodic directions of the Southern Vietnamese dialects. Starting with the tonic D, the melody is transposed and ends with the G tonic in the second section. The ‘chiều chiều’ motif (♩♩.) was used for bridging phrases and at the end.

Figure 90: ‘Lý chuồn chuồn’ (Lư 2006, 533)



Figure 91: ‘Lý ngoài mưa’ (D. Phạm 1990, 41)



3.2 INFLUENCES FROM THE GONG CULTURE

This section is in three parts. The first part presents the ethnomusicological research on the Gong musical culture of the Vietnamese highlands. The second part discusses the theoretical concept and compositional strategies used to transform Gong musical idioms and characterisation into guitar works. The discussion will be illustrated with the exploration of scordaturas, the application of guitar clusters and extended guitar techniques to capture the tone colour of the gongs, texture and ambience of Gong ensemble music. The third part documents the strategies, challenges, solution and innovation in the compositional process of *Highland Dreaming* and *Nocturne*, and an overview of other compositions, in which the social – cultural contexts, theoretical principles of Gong pitch structure, and the method of music making are adopted as a source of inspiration and musical material.

3.2.1 Vietnamese Gong culture

The Vietnamese Gong culture represents the music tradition of seventeen Austro-Asian and Austronesian ethnic groups of the central highlands. An indispensable part of the highlanders' life through ceremonies and rituals, Gong music is a divine language for the highlanders to communicate with the gods and the supernatural world. In 2005 the Vietnamese Gong culture was recognised by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Intangible Heritage of Humanity and later as a Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008 (UNESCO 2008).

Vietnamese gongs come in various sizes of between twenty-five and eighty-two centimetres in diameter. Flat gongs are smaller while bossed gongs are usually larger and thicker with lower pitch. Each ethnic group has a specific method of sound production which is either by hand or by mallet striking one side of the gong. Sometimes a large drum is also used with the ensemble (N. T. Tô 2006, 188-191).

Figure 92: Playing by hands (Nguyễn and Võ 2009)



Figure 93: Playing with mallets (Nguyễn and Võ 2009)



Figure 94: Drum (Nguyễn and Võ 2009)



While there are various scales used by the seventeen ethnic groups, the most common scale contains twelve non equal-tempered pitches. Tô Ngọc Thanh suggested that gong pitch structure is based on the “nuclear units”. This structure is a representation of a human relationship of four generations. The pitch hierarchy begins with the lowest “ancient” gongs, then the “parental” gongs as the fundamental elements of the melody, followed by the generations of “children” and “grandchildren” (figures 95 and 96) (N. T. Tô 2007, 446-475). Vũ Nhật Thăng gave further details on the measurement of this non equal-tempered scalic structure. His analysis clarified that the interval from D to F sharp; and also from A to C sharp is three and a half semitone (348 cents) (figure 97) (Viện văn hóa thông tin 2006, 197).

Figure 95: Example of the Bahna’s ‘ancient gongs’

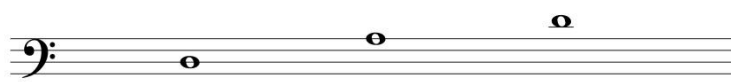


Figure 96: The three ‘nuclear units’

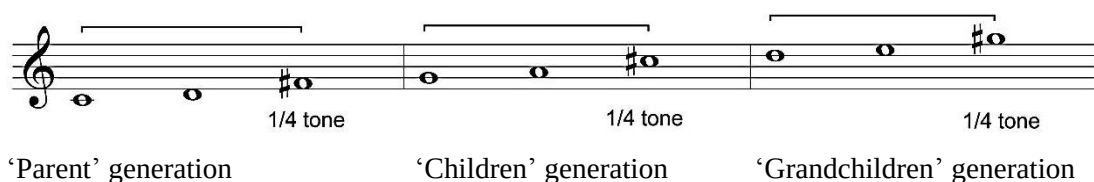
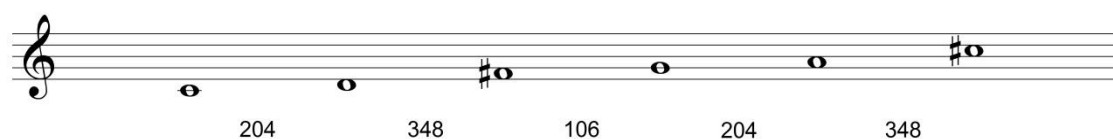


Figure 97: Pitch measurement¹⁵ (Viện văn hóa thông tin 2006, 197)



Mostly in duple metre with basic rhythmic divisions, Gong music comprises a short main musical idea which is mostly in one measure up to four measures in length. The musical module is repeated several times throughout the performance. In some cases, there is an introduction and an end (Lều, Kim Thanh 2004, 488-9). Unlike other

¹⁵ The numbers in cents are rounded.

Vietnamese genres, Gong music is only performed in a collective context with ensembles of three or up to twelve gongs. As each performer plays only one gong for the entire piece, all performers have an equal role in this method of music making. Each player has to be melodically and rhythmically interlocked with other players to create the overall musical outcome. An example of this characterisation is given in figure 98; the dotted line points out the main melody which is formed by seven gongs (Tô and Nguyễn 2006, 39-43).

Figure 98: Rhythmic and melodic interlocking (Tô and Nguyễn 2006, 131)

The image displays a musical score for a Gong ensemble, consisting of twelve staves. The staves are labeled on the left as follows: Tong, Neng, Hinh, Thi, Thi, Dtoal, Dtot, Trot, Moong, Na, Moong, and Moong. The notation is written in a Western staff format with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. A dotted line traces a melodic path across the staves, starting from the 'Tong' staff and moving down to the 'Na' staff, then up to the 'Dtot' staff, and finally down to the bottom 'Moong' staff. This dotted line represents the main melody, which is formed by the interlocking of seven gongs. The lower gongs (Dtot, Trot, Moong, Na, Moong) provide a constant rhythmic support, while the upper gongs (Tong, Neng, Hinh, Thi, Thi) play more complex melodic patterns.

The vertical impression of the lower ancient gongs constantly supporting the upper melodic materials gives Gong music an appearance of having a homophonic texture. However, a closer look will reveal the co-existence of a heterophonic texture with many melodic cells (Lê, Kim Thanh 2004, 564) (N. T. Tô 2007, 466). Some scholars even

suggest that Vietnamese highlanders mainly focus on the horizontal relationship without the vertical harmonic perception (Viện văn hóa thông tin 2006, 198-200).

Interestingly, Gong ensemble texture resembles an orchestration technique known as *klangfarbenmelodie* (tone colour melody) used by Schoenberg and Webern, in which different instruments are interlocked to produce a melody of contrasting tone colours and texture. While *klangfarbenmelodie* produces “a texture made of sparks and flashes of sound blending in a unique balance of color” as Donald Grout sees it (Grout 1973, 712); my fieldwork experience of the texture of Gong ensemble music reflects a space of dense sound mass with multiphonics and overtones. This sound phenomenon is difficult to describe in words or notation or even recording; a full comprehension can only be thoroughly achieved by attending a live performance.

3.2.2 Compositional process

As discussed earlier in the creative method, in contrast to inspiration from Vietnamese folk songs and Tài tử music whereby each composition is based on a selected tune; my creative works with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture aim to be an entire new repertoire based on the idioms, characteristics and method of music making acquired through the ethnomusicological research without direct quotation from any existing authentic Gong melodies. In a theoretical perspective, this approach reflects Bartók’s vision of the ultimate aim in the application of ethnomusicology to composition:

There is yet a third way in which the influence of peasant music can be traced in a composer’s work: neither peasant melodies nor imitations of peasant melodies can be found in his music, but it is pervaded by the atmosphere of peasant music. In this case we may say, he has completely absorbs the idiom of peasant music which has

become his mother-tongue. He masters it as completely as a poet masters his mother-tongue (Moreux 1953, 242-3).

In the aspect of pitch, Gong music scales and the concept of three-note ‘nuclear units’ are adopted in the compositional process as the fundamental melodic and harmonic material. Each three-note unit is assigned to three different strings which creates a tone-colour melody. This practice considers each guitar string as a gong, reflecting the interlocking character of Gong music and also creating Western *klangfarbenmelodie* effect. In terms of strategy and compositional functions, these ‘nuclear units’ are employed harmonically and melodically and also as texture.

Tone colours and methods of sound production of Gong ensemble music are recreated with a range of guitar extended techniques. For example, the metallic bell-like quality of guitar harmonics is used to capture the tone colour of the gongs. The percussive effects of the drum in large Gong ensembles are reflected by the technique ‘tambora’ which “the resulting sound is similar to that of a timpani” (Lunn 2010, 35), and another similar technique ‘golpe’ which involves tapping the wooden body of the guitar. As gongs are struck with either padded mallets, wooden mallets and also by hand, these methods of sound production also are reflected in guitar tone production, in which the ‘normal tone’ is played both finger nail and flesh while the bass notes representing the ‘ancient gongs’ are played with the thumb flesh only.

In the aspect of texture, several approaches were used to illustrate the co-existence of parallel melodies, homophonic, and heterophonic characterisation of Gong ensemble music. Each guitar string is assigned for a specific or combined compositional function. For homophonic texture, the fifth and sixth strings are usually the lowest layer representing the ‘ancient gongs’ D and A, combining with a harmonic layer on two or three consecutive strings to support the melodic line on another string. To create an

impression of the heterophonic effect, the harmonic layer is also used as a counter melody in an interlocking manner. The strategy to consider the guitar strings as an ensemble of six gongs has generated textures of up to six layers which include a main melody with up to two parallel melodies and three layers of support. These multi-layers are also enhanced by the addition of glissando and various rasgueado techniques which help to create the horizontal effect and also accentuate texture.

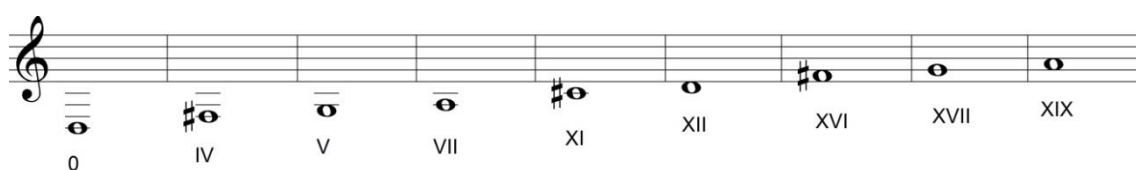
Except in the cases of *Nocturne* and *Moonlight*, the experimental research with standard tuning has been mostly unsatisfactory; or technically impossible to achieve the desired musical results. The challenges, and at times, the impossibility of incorporating Vietnamese Gong material into guitar compositions had an impact which could have affected the compositional ideas. Fortunately, these challenges in fact opened the way for a new expressive medium with guitar scordaturas.

The process of exploring and combining existing scordaturas to accommodate the musical and technical needs resulted in the creation of the new scordatura of ‘D G D G A D’ (figure 99). This solution evolved from two existing scordaturas: (1) the sixth string tuned down to D, the fifth string down to G (‘D G D G B E’); and (2) both sixth string and first string tuned down to D (‘D A D G B D’). Figure 100 shows the main pitches used in creative works with influences from Gong music.

Figure 99: Scordatura ‘D G D G A D’



Figure 100: Main pitch pallet of the new scordatura





Being performed mainly outdoors, Gong ensemble music has a space dimension with overtones and sympathetic sounds in the air which makes the overall sound much thicker. To capture this ambience, guitar clusters are used to enhance the sound amplitude and spectrum. Clusters are chords consisting of minor second intervals. Charles Taylor summarises the compositional usage of clusters as follows:

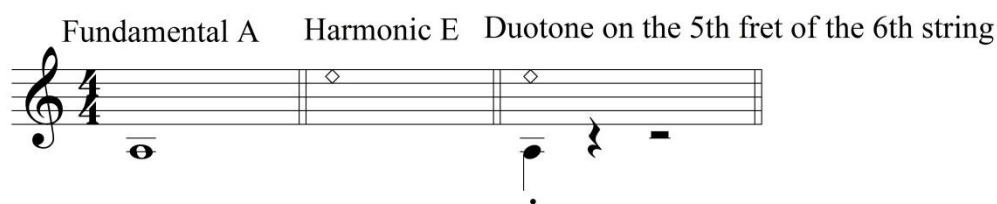
Clusters have been used by Beethoven and others at the turn of the nineteen century in “battle music” for the piano, but the term was invented by Henry Cowell in the first decades of this century (20th century)...The tendency is to hear this kind of chord as a tone with added “mass”, in other words, the new chord becomes an entity representing a wider area of pitch spectrum than that of a single tone (Schneider 1985, 166).

A tone cluster includes three semitone notes. A two-note cluster alone will generate a third tone which will add “mass” to the cluster. Schneider pointed that another important feature of cluster is “the creation of ‘beats’ between two tones, which results

in a periodic waxing and waning of loudness of the composite sound” (Schneider 1985, 166-169). The aspects of “added mass” and “beats” are perfectly suitable to capture the Gong music characteristics. With six strings on the guitar, there are three two-note clusters available at the same time. In theory, these clusters will generate at least another three notes which make a total of no less than nine-note sound mass with several ‘beats’. This sound phenomenon gives an effective textual recreation of the Gong ensemble music.

The compositional process includes the application of an innovative method of sound production on the guitar - the staccato-harmonic duotone technique. In guitar performance, it has been only possible to produce one sound of definite pitch on one string at a time. The staccato-harmonic duotone technique can simultaneously produce two definite pitches with a single stroke on one string.¹⁶ For example, a single stroke on the fifth fret of the sixth string will produce both the fundamental pitch A and the harmonic pitch E one octave and a fifth above (figure 101).

Figure 101: Example of staccato-harmonic duotone



This technique is featured in *Nocturne* in which a new texture is created by the two layers of staccato-harmonic duotone. This compositional technique is the first of its kind whereby a specific fret on a guitar string is perceived as a sound source of two layers of distinctive pitches, note values, tone colours, and articulations.

¹⁶ These two definite pitches are the fundamental and the natural harmonic at the same fret of a guitar string. A thorough explanation on the staccato-harmonic duotone is provided in Appendix VII. Recordings of staccato-harmonic duotones are included in the collection Solo Creative Works.

3.2.3.i Highland Dreaming

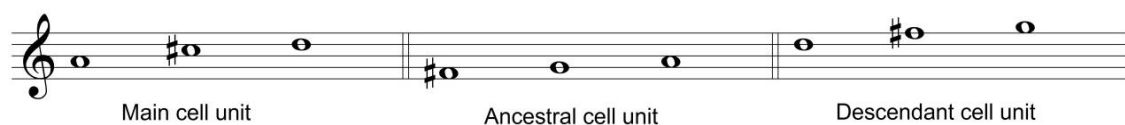
Highland Dreaming was inspired by the rugged landscapes of the highlands and the space dimension of Gong ensemble music. Taking Bartok's creative concepts as a reference, this composition was created with Gong music idioms "without original or imitating melodic materials but it is pervaded by the atmosphere" (Moreux 1953, 242). Instead, based on ethnomusicological knowledge, the characteristics of Gong music are used as the fundamental elements of this creative work.

Highland Dreaming is in two main sections. The first section has a lyrical feel with three layers of sound. The main melody is fundamentally on the first string; a counter melody creates a rhythmic interlocking layer; and there is a lower bass layer. The second section reflects the highlander's dance rhythms of 'Tơ-đrăng' and 'Tong tơ b'la'.¹⁷ Various strumming techniques are used to create the highland dance rhythms. The coda features the main melody using the tremolo technique.

In the compositional process, the Gong music concept of 'nuclear units' is adopted through the use of three main 'cell units' in *Highland Dreaming* and other works inspired by the Vietnamese Gong culture. The 'principal cell unit' contains three notes A C sharp and D; the 'ancestral cell unit' contains F sharp G A; and the 'descendant cell unit' contains D F sharp G (figure 102). These units are central to all compositions. To capture the interlocking melodic and rhythmic characteristics and also create the *klangfarbenmelodie* effect, it is desirable to have each note of the cell unit on three different strings.

¹⁷ **Tong tơ b'la:**  (Kpa, Y Lăng 2004, 387-399); **Tơ-đrăng:**  (Lêu, Kim Thanh 2004, 550-553)

Figure 102: Main cell units in *Highland Dreaming*



In the first section of *Highland Dreaming*, the three cell units are used as counter-melodies with the main melody. The excerpt in figure 103 shows the ‘principal’ cell unit in the first two bars; the ‘ancestral’ cell unit in bar three; and the ‘descendant’ cell unit in bar four:

Figure 103: Cell units used in *Highland Dreaming*



While the melody is assigned to the first string and the bass layer to the sixth string, it would be ideal to spread the cell units on the second, third and fourth strings to achieve the interlocking sound effect (figure 105). On the two common scordaturas ‘D A D G B E’ and ‘D G D G B E’, there were musical and physical challenges to achieve this compositional strategy due to an unrealistic finger spans. At some points, it was just simply humanly impossible for the left hand (figures 106).

Figure 104: Guitar tuning ‘D A D G B E’



Figure 105: Ideal interlocking sound effect

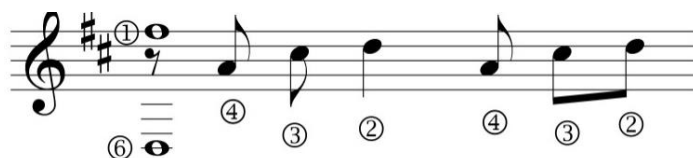
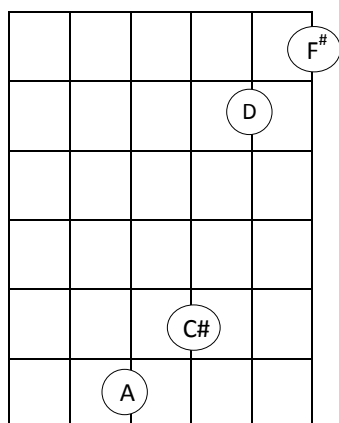


Figure 106: Main melody and cell unit on second fret of scordatura ‘D G D G B E’



An example of the challenges is shown in figure 106 where the left hand fingering is physically impossible due to a large stretch of four frets between the second (D) and the third fingers (C sharp), while also having another large span between the first (F sharp) and the fourth (A) fingers.

A new scordatura was invented as a solution to the fingering problem by adjusting both the first and second strings. This innovation evolves from the combination of the scordatura ‘D G D G B E’ and Andrew York’s scordatura ‘D A D G B D’ (used in his *Sunburst*), and another adjustment by tuning the second string down to A.

Figure 107: Scordatura ‘D G D G A D’



The immediate advantage of this new ‘D G D G A D’ scordatura is that the pitch D on the second string is on the fifth fret while the F sharp is now on the fourth fret. The Gong interlocking characteristics can be captured by performing the three notes of each cell unit on three successive fourth, third and second strings. The ‘principal’ cell and ‘descendant’ cell units are now easily playable in a moveable chord shape while the ‘ancestral’ unit is in the open position:

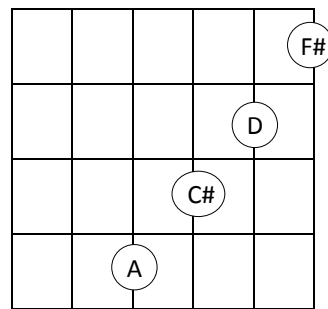
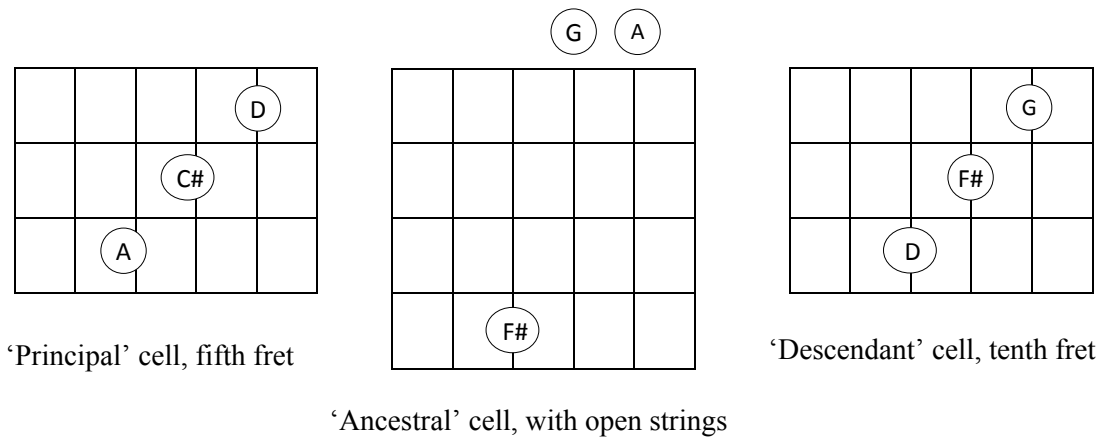


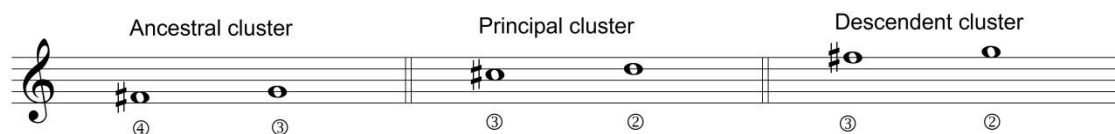
Figure 108: A major seventh

With the new scordatura, it is now possible to maintain three layers including a bass note, an interlocking melodic middle layer, and an upper melodic line on the first string. For example, an excerpt of *Highland Dreaming* (figure 105) is playable as an A major seventh chord on the fourth position (figure 108).

Sound mass texture

An important strategic aspect of all compositions with Gong music influences was to add sound ‘mass’ to the overall texture. This is possible when using the three cell units as interlocking counter-melody, the two-note clusters within the units will add sound mass and create texture to capture the space dimension and dense sounds of Gong ensemble music. Practically, each cluster will generate another note and also ‘beats’. Schneider explained the principle of two-note clusters as follows: “The beat frequency (beats per second or bps) is always the difference between the frequencies of the two waves” (Schneider 1985, 169). Based on this formula, the three clusters used in *Highland Dreaming* will generate from eleven to twenty-two beats. The principal cluster (C#4 = 277 Hz and D4 = 293 Hz) will beat at approximately sixteen beats; the ancestral cluster (F#3 = 185 Hz and G3 = 196 Hz) will beat at approximately eleven

beats; the descendant cluster ($F^{\#}4 = 370$ and $G4 = 392$) will beat at approximately at twenty-two beats (Wolfe 1997).



Guitar as a Gong Ensemble

The second part of *Highland Dreaming* is an exploration into achieving the maximum sound mass and compositional function for six sound layers. By viewing each guitar string as a layer of sound, it is possible to have six-part texture with the new tuning system including three melodic layers and three supporting layers. The six-part texture is enhanced with the use of clusters and glissandi to create a miniature multiphonic sound experience of Gong ensemble music.

The multi-part texture is presented in two ways in the dance-like section:

1. In the first part, the supporting layers are on the sixth, fourth and first strings; the main melody is in unison on the second and third strings, and the same melody is one octave lower on the fifth string. This texture is summarised in the following diagram:

First string	Supporting layer
Second string	Main melody
Third string	Main melody doubling
Fourth string	Supporting layer
Fifth string	Main melody one octave lower
Sixth string	Supporting layer

2. In the second part, the supporting layers are on the sixth, fourth and second strings; the melody is now dominantly on the first string, with a parallel fifth

melody on the third string, and its melody one octave lower on the fifth string.

This texture is shown in the diagram below:

First string	Main melody
Second string	Supporting layer
Third string	Parallel melody a fifth below
Fourth string	Supporting layer
Fifth string	Same melody on third string one octave lower
Sixth string	Supporting layer

Due to voicing, it is very difficult, almost impossible to notate this texture using the conventional guitar notation in a single stave. Notation in two staves was also not convincing. Attempts with three stave and six stave notation have been successful to illustrate the six-part texture. Examples of three-stave (figure 109) and six-stave scores (figure 111) with diagrams of texture (figures 110 and 112) are provided below.

Figure 109: *Highland Dreaming* written in three staves

The musical score for 'Highland Dreaming' is written in three staves. The top staff is labeled '2nd = D' and the bottom staff is labeled '1st = D'. The middle staff is labeled '3rd = G' and '5th = G'. The bottom staff is also labeled '4th = D' and '6th = D'. The score is in 4/4 time and features a complex texture with multiple voices.

Figure 110: Diagram of texture in three stave notation

Second string	Main melody
Third and fifth strings	Main melody and melody an octave lower
First string, fourth, sixth strings	Supporting layers

Figure 111: *Highland Dreaming* written in six staves

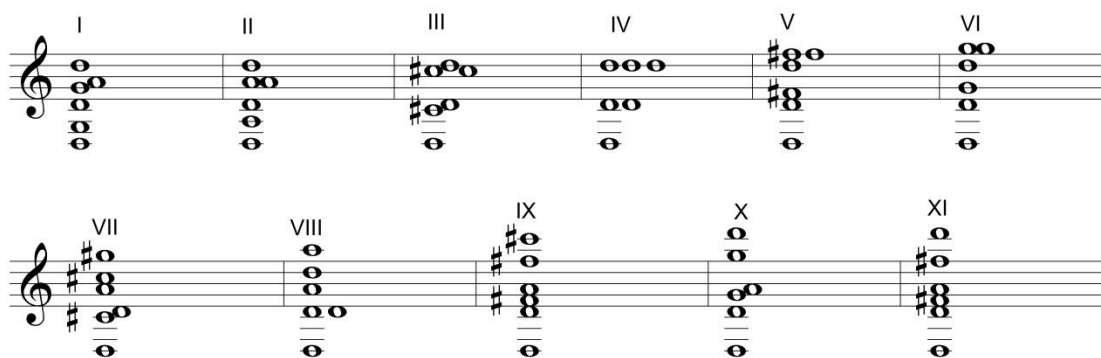


Figure 112: Diagram of texture in six stave notation

First string	Supporting layer
Second string	Main melody
Third string	Main melody doubling
Fourth string	Supporting layer
Fifth string	Main melody one octave lower
Sixth string	Supporting layer

Harmonically and in performance practice, the texture is based on the ten newly-found sound combinations available from the scordatura (figure 113). Each sound combination could be considered as ‘chord’ of six notes with open strings. In normal guitar tuning with sixth string to D, it is impossible to perform some of those chords on the guitar due to the massive stretches of eight to nine frets. Examples of the impossible spans are shown in figure 114.

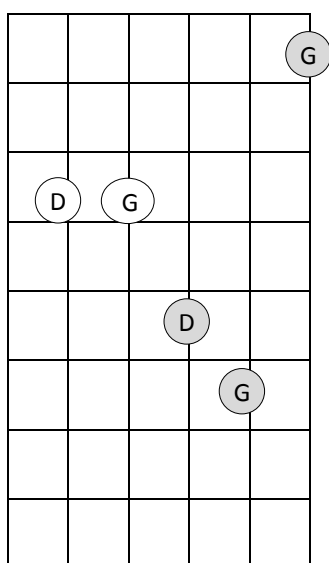
Figure 113: New sound combinations



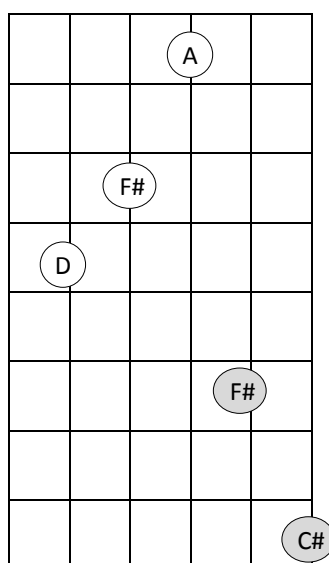
The compositional process of Highland Dreaming and other compositions with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture has seen the transformation of the guitar as a new expressive medium to accommodate Gong music characteristics. The findings of new technical and musical possibilities on the guitar such as clusters, added sound mass, interlocking melody and multi-part texture, are original contributions to knowledge and pave the way to unprecedented outcomes in later compositions of this project.

Figure 114: Examples of impossible spans

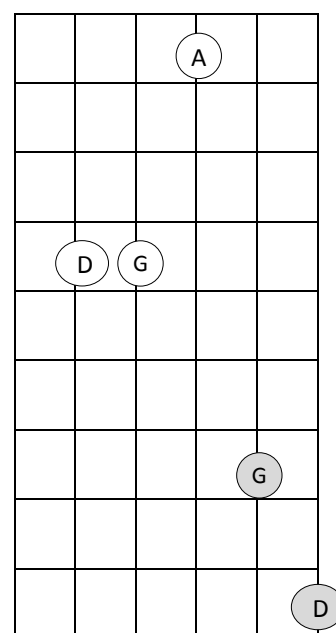
Chord VI (3rd fret)



Chord IX (2nd fret)



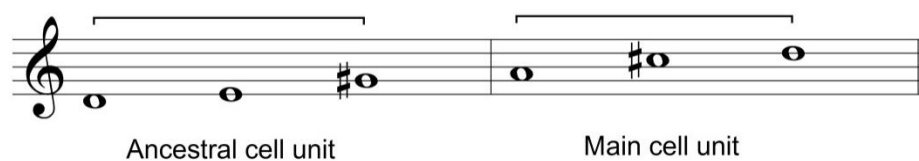
Chord X (2nd fret)



3.2.3.ii Nocturne

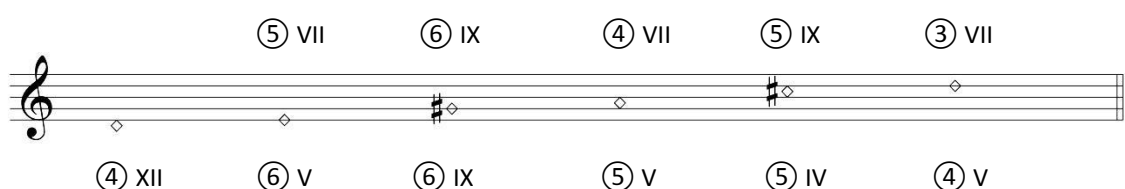
In contrast to *Highland Dreaming*'s multi-layer texture and sound amplitude, *Nocturne* depicts the tranquility and spiritual ambience of the night in the highlands by capturing the tone colours of Vietnamese gongs in monophonic and two-part textures. Like *Highland Dreaming* and other works with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture, *Nocturne* is an example that reflects Bartok's creative method that "neither folk melody nor imitation of folk melody can be found in the composer's music, but it is pervaded by the atmosphere of folk music" (Moreux 1953, 242). Using this conceptual direction, this creative work is also an endeavor to absorb the idiom of Gong music "as a poet masters his mother-tongue" (Moreux 1953, 243).

Figure 115: Pitch structure of *Nocturne*



Nocturne has a binary structure in which the first section is a single melodic line, and the second section has a dance-like character. Selecting only the natural harmonics on the bass strings, which project a 'metallic' sound and thicker 'mass', this creative work aims to be a miniature soundscape of the ambience of Vietnamese Gong music. Written in standard guitar tuning (E A D G B E), the available harmonics are used to form a Gong pitch structure of two 'cell units'. The main cell unit contains three notes A, C sharp, and D and the 'ancestral cell unit' contains D, E, and G sharp (figure 115). This pitch structure also contains two two-note clusters: 1) G sharp and A; 2) C sharp and D.

Figure 116: Natural harmonics on the bass strings



In standard tuning, some natural harmonics of the same pitch are found on different locations (figure 116, pitch is one octave higher than written). This setting is central in achieving the interlocking effect and to create texture. An illustration of the two locations of the same harmonic note is given in figure 117:

1. Harmonic note E is available on two locations: the fifth fret of the sixth string; and the seventh fret of the fifth string
2. Harmonic note G sharp: the fourth fret of the sixth string; and the ninth fret of the same sixth string.
3. Harmonic note A: the fifth fret of the fifth string; and the seventh fret of the fourth string.
4. Harmonic note C sharp: the fourth fret of the fifth string; and the ninth frets of the same fifth string.

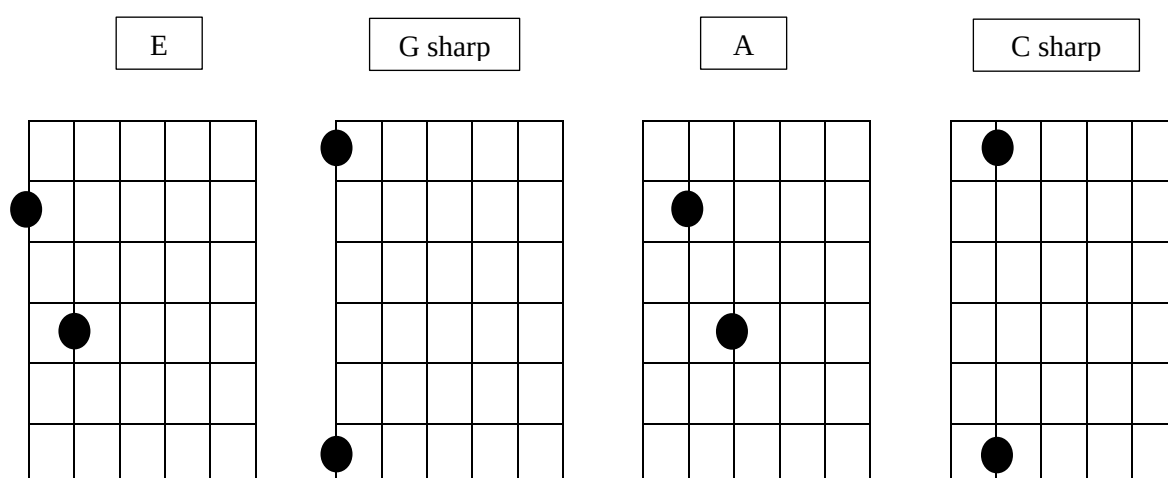


Figure 117: Example of harmonic locations. Guitar charts are at fourth fret.

Throughout the composition, the entire main melody is assigned to the available natural harmonics in an interlocking manner. In the melodic progression a different pitch is always chosen to be on a different string. This compositional strategy reflects the ethnomusicological research of the Gong music making method and how to use it as a

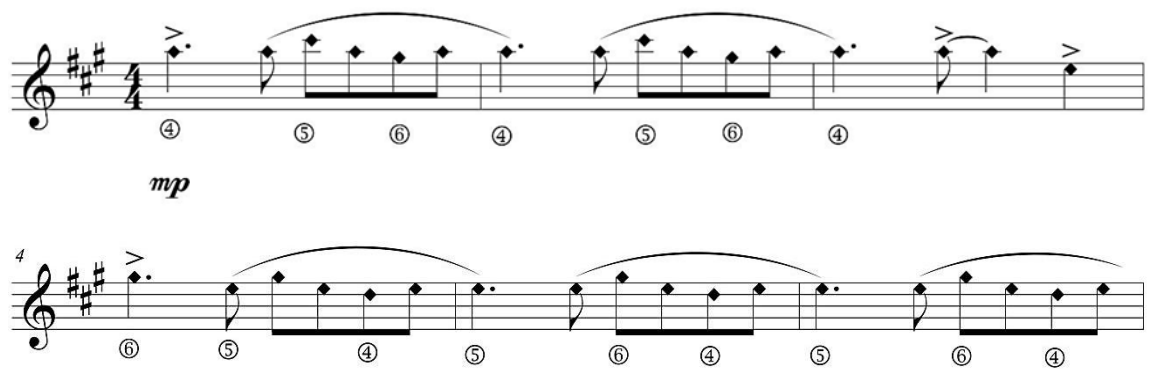
basis for composition. The first section of *Nocturne* can be perceived and performed as an ensemble of five gongs D, E, G sharp, A, and C sharp (figure 118).

Figure 118: *Nocturne* as a Gong Ensemble

The musical score for Figure 118 is written for five gongs: C#, A, G#, E, and D. Each gong is represented by a staff in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system shows the initial measures for each gong. The second system, starting with a measure rest, shows the continuation of the patterns. The gongs play interlocking rhythmic patterns of eighth and quarter notes.

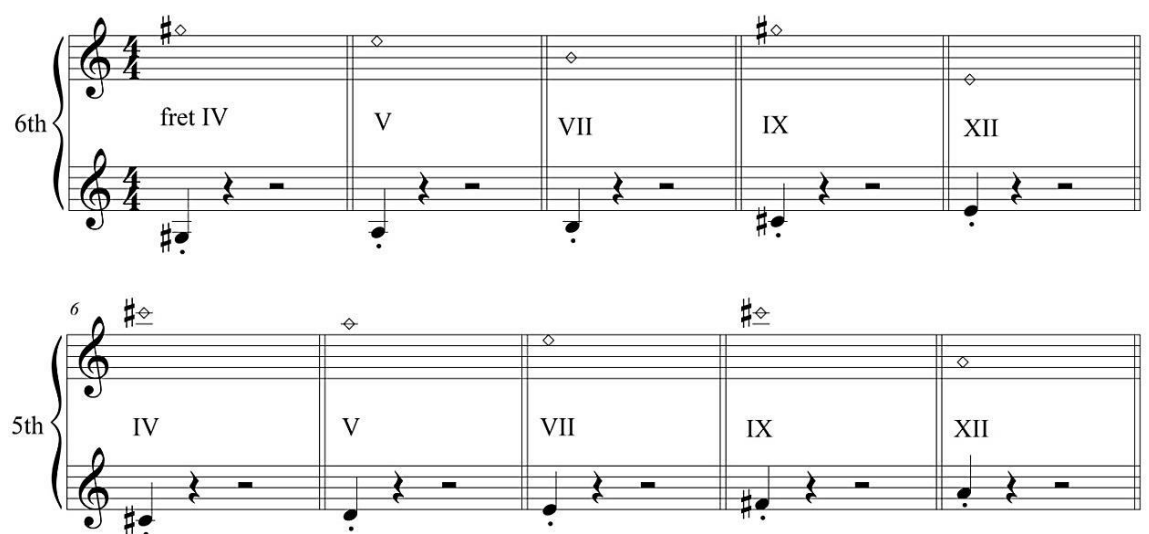
On the guitar, while each gong is represented by a natural harmonic note, the interlocking character and ‘added mass’ texture are achieved by string choice and location choice on the fingerboard (figure 119).

Figure 119: *Nocturne*, excerpt of first section



In contrast with the monophonic texture in the first section, the second section has a dance-like character with two-part texture. This section features the new staccato-harmonic duotone technique which provides two layers of distinctive tone colours and articulations on one guitar string (figure 121). In this texture, the natural harmonic layer of the duotones is still employed as the main melodic line while the lower layer is used as an ostinato to support the melody. *Nocturne* contains duotones on the fourth, fifth, seventh, and ninth frets on the six and the fifth strings, which are clearly audible and there is a strong contrast between the fundamentals and the harmonics (figure 120).

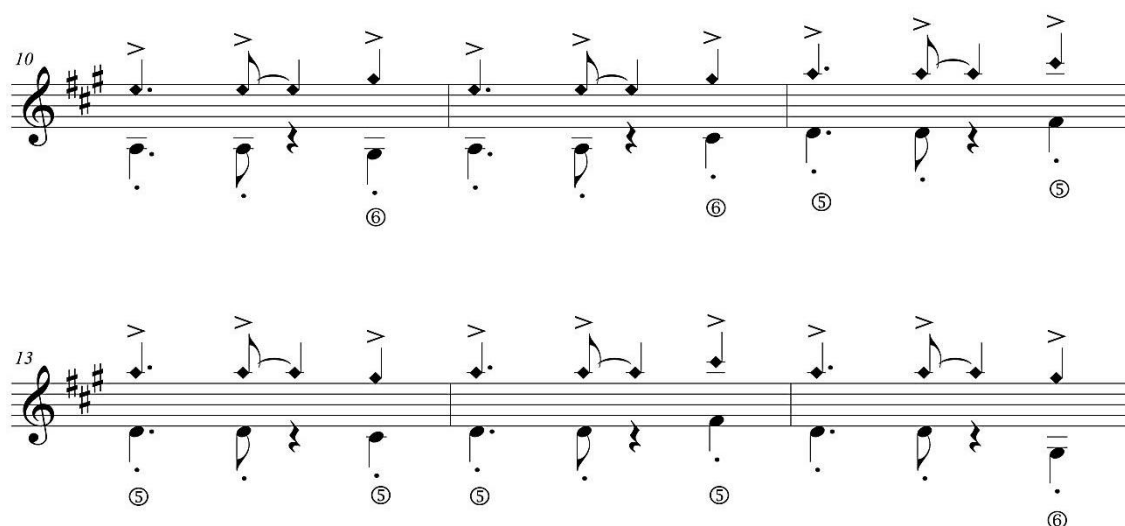
Figure 120: Duotones used in *Nocturne*



To perform these two layers simultaneously using standard guitar technique, the lower layer would be played on a bass string while the natural or artificial harmonic note of

the melodic layer must be played on another string. On the contrary, with the staccato-harmonic duotone technique, it is possible to produce both layers on one string. This compositional effect is unprecedented in guitar literature, where a specific fret on a guitar string is perceived as a sound source of two distinctive layers.

Figure 121: Duotones in *Nocturne*



Due to the limited availability and the restriction of the combination of two layers, it is a challenge to incorporate duotones into composition. In the compositional process, a systematic look at duotones on different strings with the same harmonics or the same lower notes has enabled the simultaneous development of both the melodic line and the lower staccato bass line in the second section.

Figure 122: Same harmonics, different lower notes

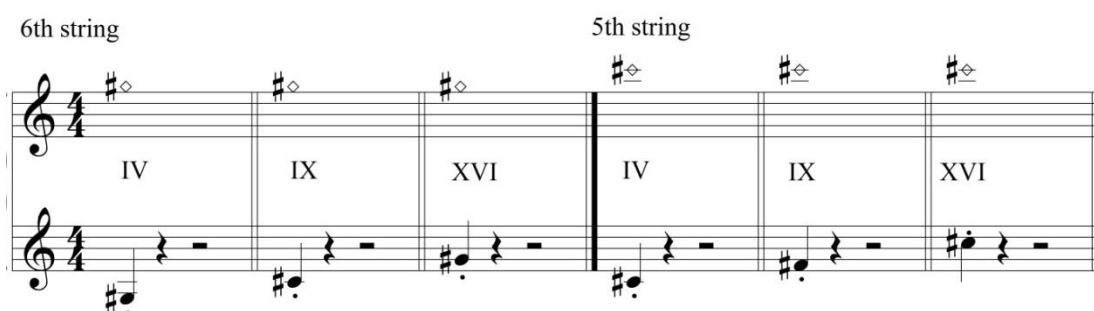
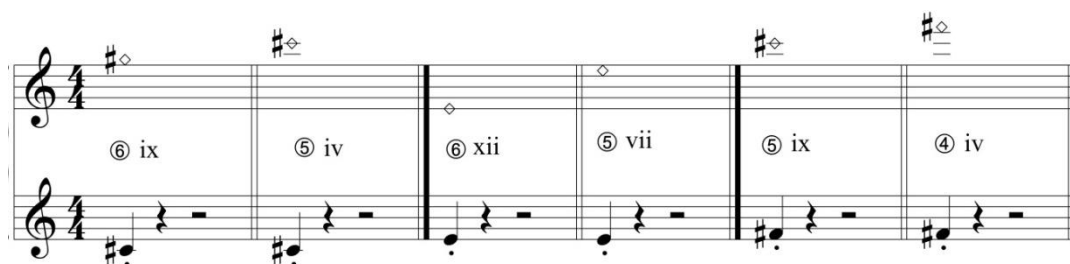


Figure 123: Same lower note, different harmonics



Summary

A ‘poetic’ miniature soundscape of Gong music, the compositional process of *Nocturne* is the synthesis of ethnomusicological research and composition based on new findings from experimental research. In a compositional context, the use of duotones to add a lower layer to support the melody in natural harmonics brings about the unity and also the contrasts to the creative work. Even though it could be possible to perform the two layers of *Nocturne*’s second section on two strings, the texture and tone colours of two notes generated on one string are unique in guitar composition. In the performance context, the awareness that two layers of different pitch and tone colour are produced simultaneously at the same fret is also an original contribution to knowledge.

3.2.3.iii Other compositions with influences from the Gong culture

Call of the Mountain Forest

Call of the Mountain Forest is another major composition which has been featured in all public performances during this creative project. Inspired by the ambience of a dark night in the mystical landscape of the highlands and the belief in the supernatural world, the composition is written as a form of communication between humans and the Gods.

This composition is in binary form with pitch structure also based on the three ‘cell units’, similar to *Highland Dreaming*. The first section contains a melody in a cantabile style supported by a drone bass and a middle layer of the ancestral and principal two-note clusters, enhanced by the vibrato technique (figure 124). In the second section, the

main cell units are also used as the harmonic layer to support the main melodic line on the first string, suggesting a homophonic texture (figure 125).

Figure 124: Two-note clusters used for texture



Figure 125: Cell units used harmonically



In the compositional process, three more exotic new chords (figure 126) emerged in addition to the eleven sound combinations found in *Highland Dreaming*. The second section is based on these new chords and the three main cell units.

Figure 126: New chords



The bridging phrases connecting the sections are scale passages ascending from the lowest string to the higher notes of the first string, depicting the shape of the mountain forest. A similar scale passage is used for the end (figure 128).

Figure 127: Example of bridging phrase

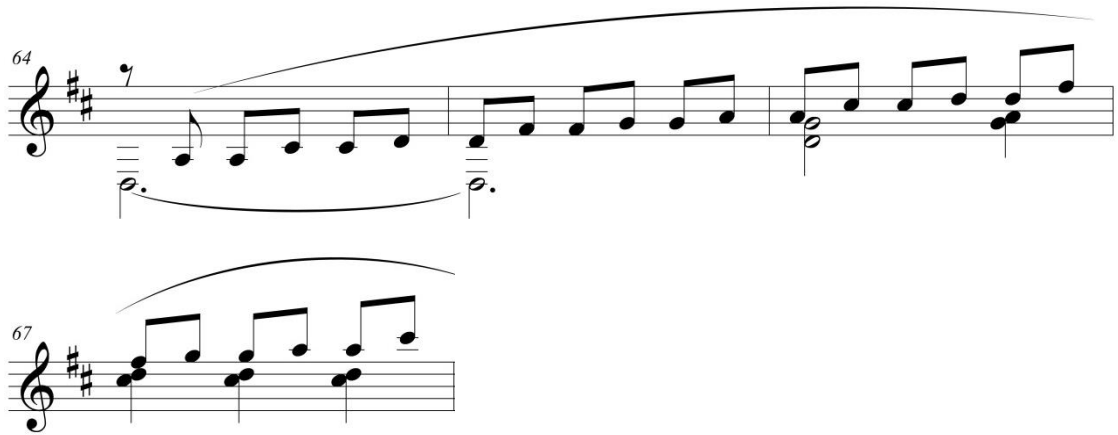


Figure 128: Ending phrase



Gods of the Highlands

This creative work focuses on ‘added mass’ sound clusters, sympathetic resonance and percussive effects through the use of strumming, glissando, rasgueados, golpe and tambora as a prayer to the Gods. Similar to *Highland Dreaming*, the musical texture comprises six sound layers moving in parallel motion with an addition of a percussive layer. Each string of the guitar represents a layer of gongs and the guitar’s bridge represents the large drum. The parallel melodies are formed by the open string chord and chords in a moveable shape (figure 130).

Figure 129: Chord used in *Gods of the Highlands*

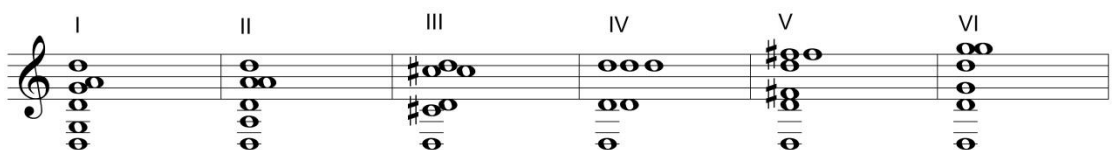


Figure 130: Example of glissando, rasgueados and tambora usage

2nd = D
3rd = G
5th = G
1st = D
4th = D
6th = D
Tambora

rasgueado a m i

Come Together

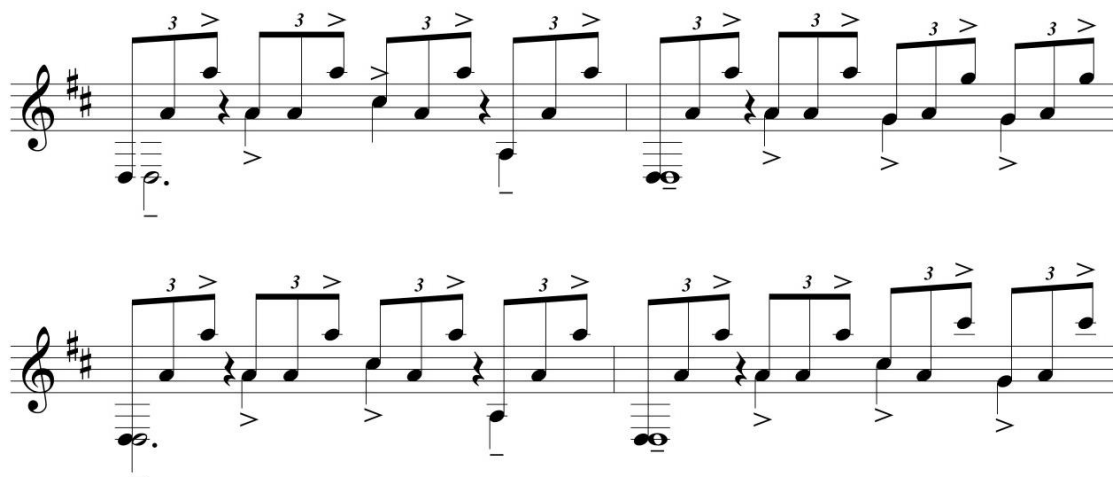
A musical description of a harvest day in the central highlands, *Come Together* is inspired by the activities and the sounds of the highlanders celebrating a good rice crop. The first section is in a cantabile style with the main motif starting on the fourth string (figure 131) then developing into higher registers on the third, second and first strings.

Figure 131: Main motif

The second section depicts the activities of the highlanders working in the rice field based on the *Tơ-đrăng* rhythm. Mainly performed at festivals, *Tơ-đrăng*'s tempo is fast, loud and very lively (Lều, Kim Thanh 2004, 548-565). This rhythmic pattern is adapted on the sixth string as an ostinato of the ancient gongs D and A. Two melodies are

interwoven in a rapid polyrhythmic pattern to reflect the lively harvesting activities (figure 132).

Figure 132: ‘Harvesting’ activities



Moonlight

Recreating the tone colour of the gongs using the natural harmonics, *Moonlight* exists as a micro composition which contains the essence of the highlanders’ music. Reflecting an ensemble of six gongs, the harmonics on the guitar are carefully chosen to form the melodic and rhythmic interlocking character. The ambience of the moonlight on the highlands is captured by the poetic texture of clusters and overtones created by two parallel melodies (figure 133).

Figure 133: Two parallel melodies



Figure 134: *Moonlight* reflecting a composition for six-gong ensemble

The musical score is for a six-gong ensemble, titled "Moonlight". It is written for six staves, each representing a different gong: F#, D, C#, A, G#, and E. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score consists of two systems of four measures each.

Staff 1: Gong F#
 Measures 1-4: Rest.

Staff 2: Gong D
 Measures 1-4: Rest.

Staff 3: Gong C#
 Measure 1: Rest.
 Measure 2: Quarter note C#.
 Measure 3: Quarter note C#.
 Measure 4: Rest.

Staff 4: Gong A
 Measure 1: Rest.
 Measure 2: Quarter note A.
 Measure 3: Quarter note A.
 Measure 4: Rest.

Staff 5: Gong G#
 Measure 1: Quarter rest, eighth note G#.
 Measure 2: Quarter rest, eighth note G#.
 Measure 3: Quarter rest, eighth note G#.
 Measure 4: Quarter rest, eighth note G#.

Staff 6: Gong E
 Measure 1: Rest.
 Measure 2: Rest.
 Measure 3: Quarter note E.
 Measure 4: Quarter note E.

The second system of the score continues the patterns established in the first system, with the G# gong providing a continuous rhythmic and melodic line, and the other gongs contributing with sparse, punctuated notes.

3.3 BEYOND VIETNAMESE INFLUENCES

The compositional process in this project has seen the transformation of the guitar into many different forms to accommodate the ethnomusicological aspects of the creative works. The synthesis between academic research and experimental exploration on the guitar, as the new compositional medium, has resulted in a new creative idiom with unprecedented technical – musical possibilities. Further exploration of these possibilities without the cultural-ethnomusicological confines has opened up an exciting compositional ‘wonderland’ in this project. With new fingering possibilities, the metamorphosis of a range of guitar techniques and guitar writing idioms has resulted in ‘the most fecund musical outcomes’ for use in composition.

Figure 135: Examples of new chords ‘beyond Vietnamese influences’

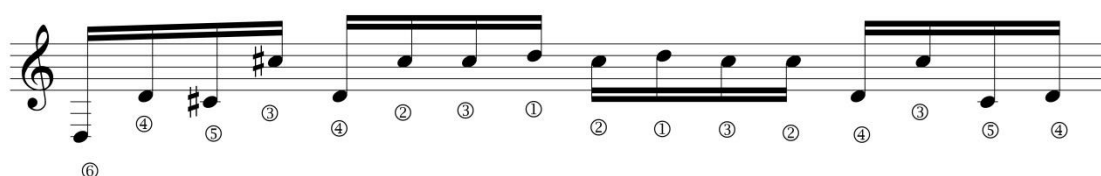


colour and texture. The exploration to combine guitar idiomatic right hand patterns with the new chords has also created diverse textural effects. For instance, a cluster chord can create different textural effects with two different right hand patterns normally used for arpeggios (figure 136 and figure 137).

Figure 136: Right hand pattern: p i m a m i



Figure 137: Right hand pattern: p i p i, p m i a, m a i m, p i p i

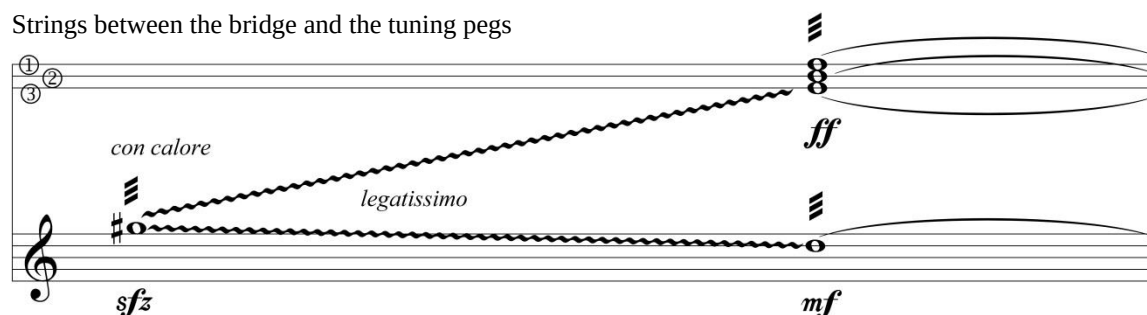


Textural changes have also been used for compositional structures. Sections in a creative work are differentiated by contrasting textures created by a range of extended guitar techniques including tremolo, glissandos, tambora, and various rasgueados and strumming methods. An additional resource for texture is the inclusion of indefinite pitch; noise-like and percussive sounds. For example, the aggressive fierce texture of the string scratching technique is used to describe the ‘windstorms’ in *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*. In another example, the detached explosive tone colour of the snap pizzicato technique depicts the gun shots in *Farewell to the Mountain Forest*.

During this experimental process, a new technique, ‘duo-tremolo’, has been invented, in which the left hand performs the tremolo technique on the strings between the bridge and the tuning pegs simultaneously while the right hand also performs tremolo on an open string. An example of duo-tremolo usage is shown in figure 138. The left hand

slides from the note G sharp to perform tremolo on the strings between the bridge and the tuning pegs while the right hand continues to tremolo on the open D string.

Figure 138: Duo-tremolo



Melodically, new pitch structures have been established that merge Western tonality and atonality with Asian materials, without direct reference to Vietnamese or any other specific cultures. Through new string choice and techniques such as glissando, hammer-on and pull-off; there are options to add different tone colours to a melody. Diverse *klangfarbenmelodie* effects have also been discovered using a combination of guitar idiomatic right hand patterns and left hand fingering in the new scordatura.

Figure 139: A tone colour melody in *Farewell to the Mountain Forest*



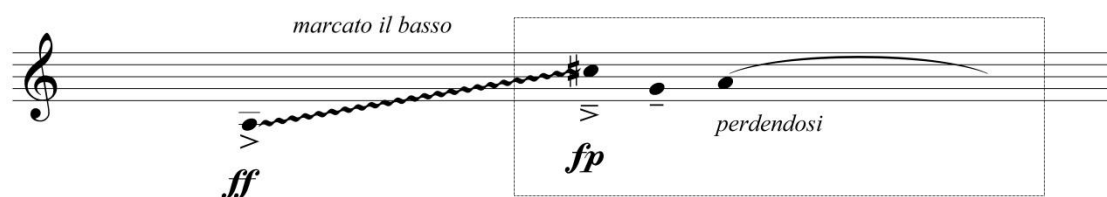
The creative approach to multi-layer writing is based on the strategy to consider a string or a group of interlocking strings as a layer. Taking advantage of the open strings, this approach has brought about some exciting results. An example of five-layer texture is given in figure 140. In this excerpt from *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*, there are two melodic lines; an interlocking melody in an arpeggio manner, plus two layers of bass notes.

Figure 140: Multi-layer texture, *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*



There are elements of indeterminacy and improvisation in all creative works beyond Vietnamese influences. Structurally, the quantity of repeats for certain sections such as in *Heart of the Ocean*, or selected motifs in *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*, are not pre-determined, but will be decided during the performance situation (figure 141). Partial pitch indeterminacy and total rhythmic extemporization are the main features in *Prelude*, in which pitch sets are defined but rhythms and melodic formations are improvised. Also, in *Prelude*, partial-indeterminacy in structure creates certain musical ideas to accentuate the punctuality, while other ideas are to be played randomly.

Figure 141: Example of motifs with unspecified repeats



The creative works beyond Vietnamese influences in this project reflect the aim of achieving characterisation of originality and identity, rather than the perspective of Vietnamese authenticity (Nketia 1982). Having roots in the creative ethnomusicological process, these compositions could intentionally or unintentionally contain traces of hereditary Vietnamese traditional music, or none at all. Nevertheless, the compositional process beyond Vietnamese influences has contributed unique creative idioms to the development of an emerging new voice.

3.3.i Dawn of the Mountain Forest

This creative work is the main example of compositions beyond Vietnamese influences in this project. Written after the field trip to the highlands in 2013, initially *Dawn of the Mountain Forest* was composed as a solo guitar piece but later developed as an ensemble piece with percussion instrument. Depicting the creation of Earth, a large range of extended guitar techniques is explored in the scordatura ‘D G D G A D’ to create various textures to create various textures of space, air, light, water, fire and earth.

1. SPACE

The composition opens with a texture representing ‘aether’ or ‘black matter’ space of added sound mass which contains clusters derived from the exploration to capture the ambience of Gong music. The sustained ‘ancient cluster’ of two notes, C sharp and D, spreads over one octave and a major seventh. The ‘cluster’ feel is maintained by various arpeggiated patterns, while the melodic note is sustained by the tremolo technique. Throughout the section, the ‘aether’ force modulates and returns between newly-found chord-textures giving support for the melodic line moving in glissando, which is regarded as another texture; at times there are drops of natural harmonic tone colour in

the whole sound picture. This compositional technique seeks to suggest the combination of an ‘unsettled static’ texture with another ‘moving’ texture.

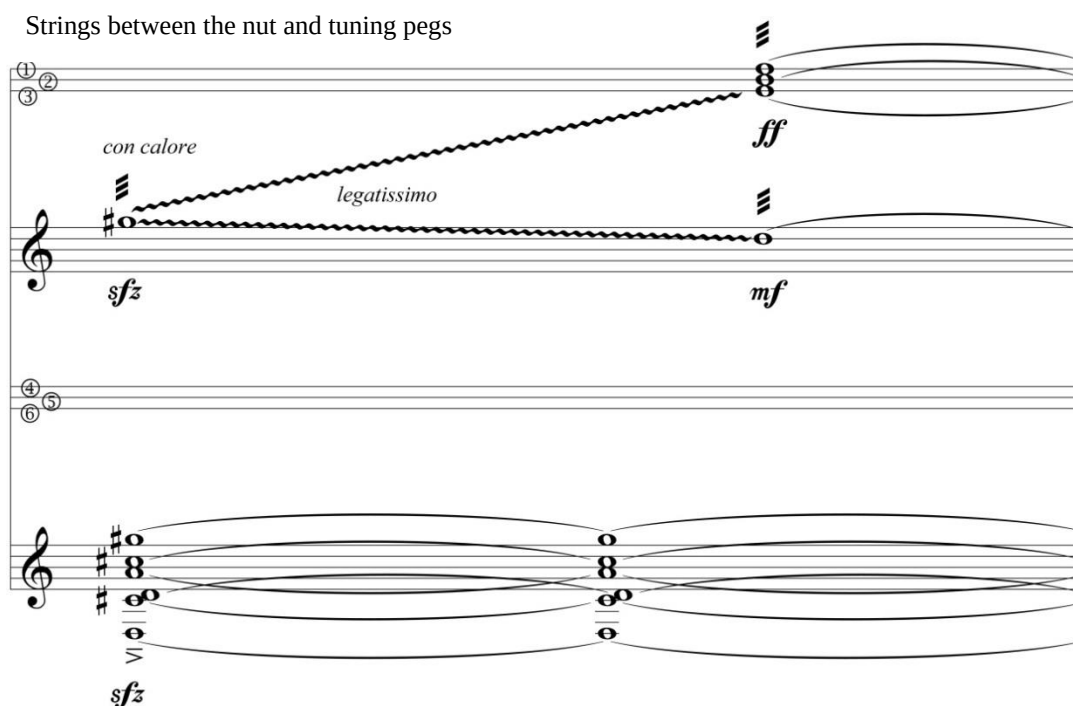
Figure 142: ‘Aether’ Space texture



2. AIR

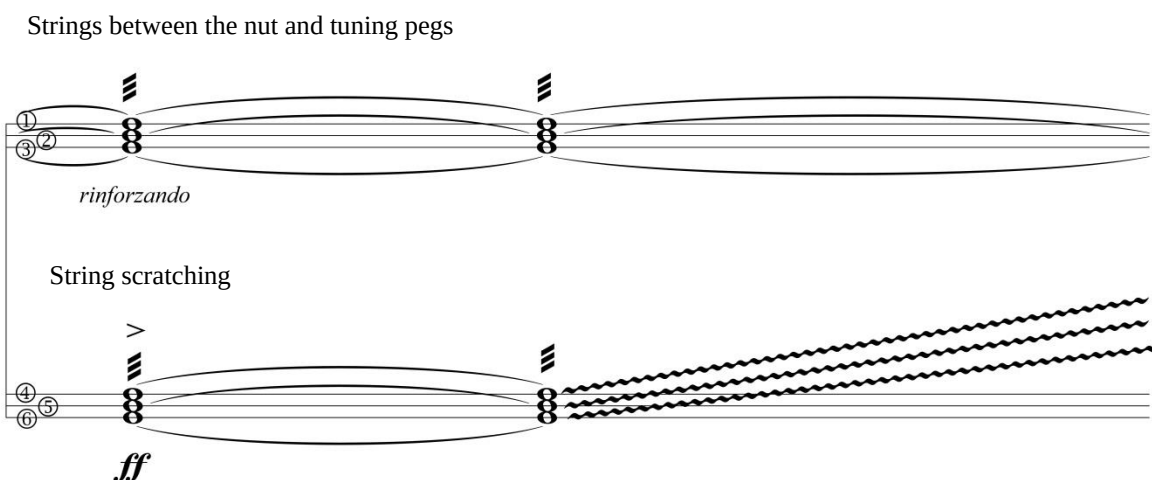
The *Air* section features a range of extended guitar techniques used as sound effects, and contrasting textures to depict the wind character. The modulation to this section takes place when the tremolo melody of *Aether Space* slides to become two layers of duo-tremolo; one with the open first string D, the other with indefinite pitches on the strings between the tuning pegs and the nut (figure 143). This technique is alternated with another duo-tremolo technique, in which one layer continues with the strings between the tuning pegs and the nut, while a new layer is created by scratching on the three bass strings (figure 144). Tremolo string scratching explores sound colours on various positions of the string length.

Figure 143: Duo-tremolo



Notes: The strings between the tuning pegs and the nut are notated as three line staff with indication of first, second and third strings. String scratching is notated on a three line staff indicating the fourth, fifth and sixth strings. This method of notation was used by other composers like Nitika Koshkin and Alberto Ginastera (Lunn 2010, 63-66).

Figure 144: Duo tremolo with string scratching



Within the two new duo-tremolo textures, the tremolo on the open string D continues to provide a layer of drone. The shifts between the aggressive heavy texture of string scratching and the much thinner sounds between the tuning pegs and the nut, create the chaotic and contrasting effects of the powerful windstorms. In this mixture, a melodic line emerges and sustains on interlocking patterns, followed by sparks of natural harmonic motifs that hint that change is coming. The glissandi melody continues to ascend and descend vigorously in indeterminate rhythmic gestures on the bass strings, then finally descends to an explosive end on the sixth string to introduce the new section *Light*.

Figure 145: Duo-tremolo with sparks of natural harmonic motifs

The musical score for Figure 145 is composed of five staves. The top staff depicts a tremolo texture on the open string D, marked with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and an *animato* tempo. The second staff introduces a melodic line, beginning with a *rinforzando* marking and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third staff features three natural harmonic motifs, each marked with a diamond symbol and a slur. These motifs are labeled *brillante* (forte, *f*), *piu brillante* (forte, *f*), and *molto brillante* (fortissimo, *ff*). The bottom staff shows a glissandi melody on the bass strings, marked with a fortissimissimo (*sffz*) dynamic.

3. LIGHT

Recreating the multi-rays of rising sunlight, this section features the multi-layer texture inherited from Vietnamese Gong ensemble music. Even though it has a definite feel that points towards the key of D major, traces of pitch organisation of the Vietnamese highlanders can be found through the use of ‘cell units’ as arpeggiated harmonic

support. Each interlocking unit consists of notes on three different strings, where the last note is also assigned as the melody. The reflection of light is illustrated by employing the pull-off technique on this melodic note to create a syncopated parallel melody.

Figure 146: Example of ‘cell units’ used in *Light*

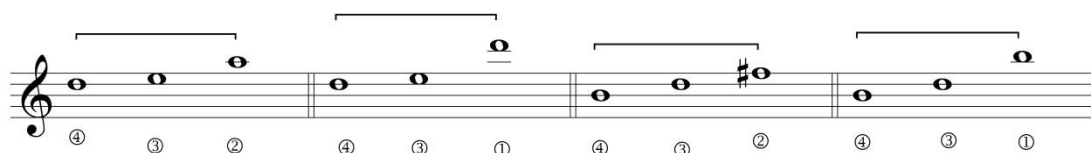
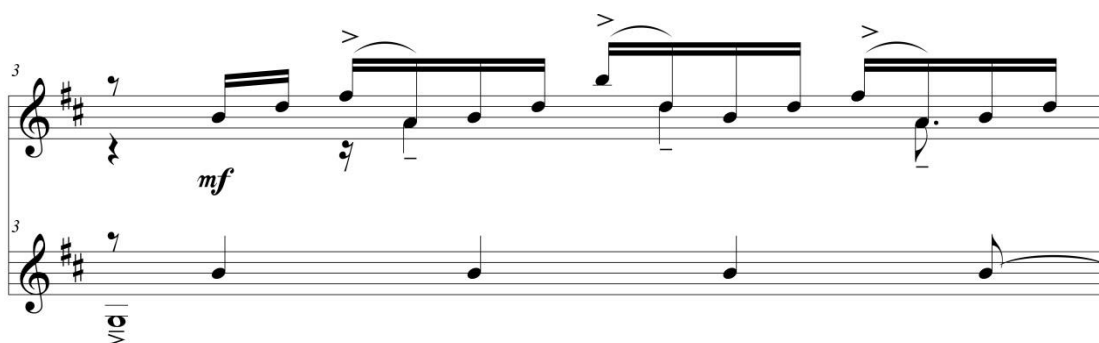
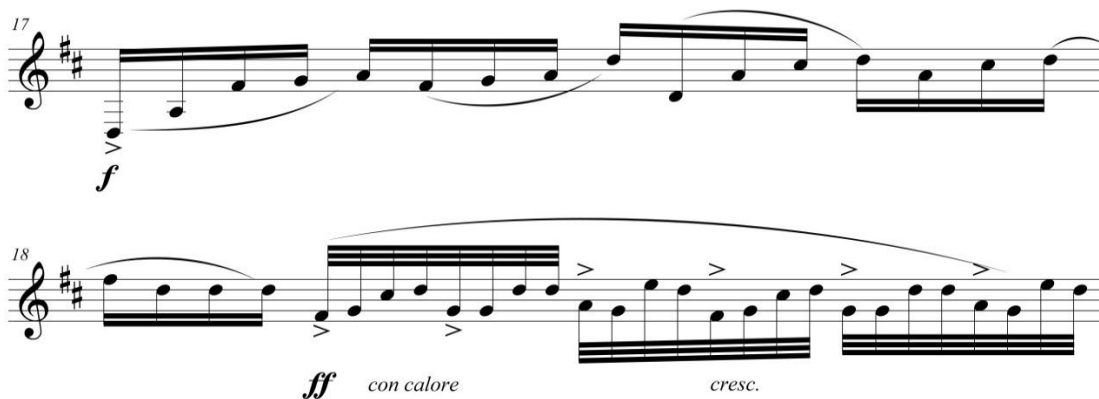


Figure 147: Pull-off technique used to create another layer



The multi-texture is followed by extensive scale and arpeggiated passages suggesting the vast scenery of the highlands covered in full sunlight. These passages are combined with three chords for structural purpose and end with a fast tempo to modulate to *Water* texture (figure 148).

Figure 148: Passages modulating to *Water* section



4. WATER

The compositional strategy of this section is to create a 'flowing' texture in the attempt to capture various water forms by applying idiomatic guitar compositional techniques. A series of chords in moveable and similar shapes ascends with fixed right hand patterns combined with pull-off techniques on the left hand to achieve musical unity and playability of this fast section. Even though exact pitch and rhythmic material is pre-determined, each 'water' motif flows to the next motif in an indeterminate repetitive manner (figure 149). At the end of this section, the last motif becomes a fast arpeggiated pattern which ascends and descends repeatedly in transition to the next section *Fire*.

Figure 149: 'Water' motifs

Figure 149 displays three musical staves, each representing a different 'Water' motif. The staves are arranged vertically, with blue lines connecting them to show a progression or relationship. Each staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).

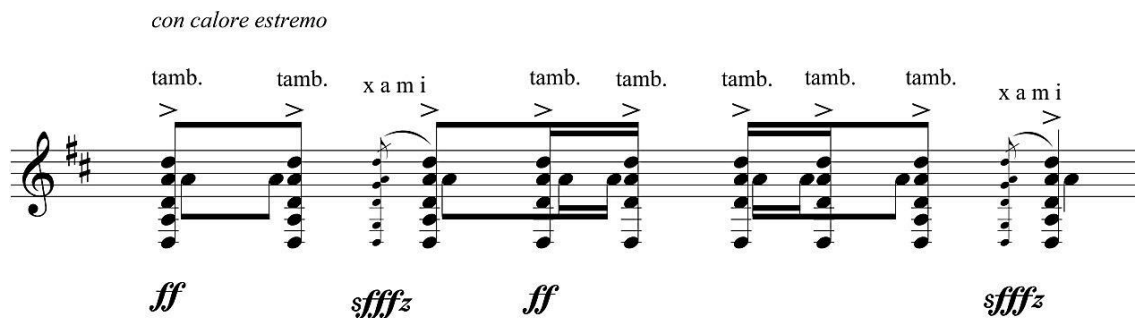
- Top Staff:** Labeled *dolcissimo* at the top. It features a motif starting with a *p* (piano) dynamic, followed by *leggero* (light), and ending with *un poco crescendo* (a little crescendo).
- Middle Staff:** Labeled *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the beginning, followed by *con energico* (with energy), and ending with *un poco pesante* (a little heavy).
- Bottom Staff:** Labeled *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the beginning, followed by *con energico* (with energy), and ending with *un poco pesante* (a little heavy).

The motifs are connected by blue lines, indicating a flow or progression from the top staff to the middle, and then to the bottom.

5. FIRE

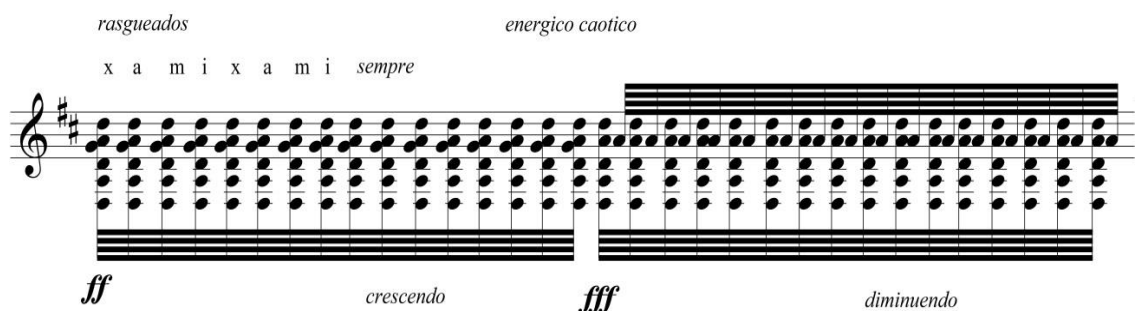
In the beginning of the section *Fire*, the last ‘water’ motif modulates into a new texture depicting the mixture of fire and liquids in volcanic eruptions. This motif is transformed into a rapid *rasgueado* pattern; gradually increasing in volume, then bursts into a dancing rhythm with strumming and *tambora* techniques in a sequence of six new chords. Some of these chords were acquired in compositional process but considered not suitable for creative works with influences from Gong music. They also contain clusters which add ‘mass’ and ‘beats’ into the texture of this section.

Figure 150: Dancing rhythm in *Fire*



Towards the end of the section, the dancing rhythm is transformed again into a dense and chaotic texture of indeterminate harmonic progressions based on a palette of six chords. The use of a different *rasgueados* technique which includes both outward and inward motions suggests the increasingly aggressive flames of fire.

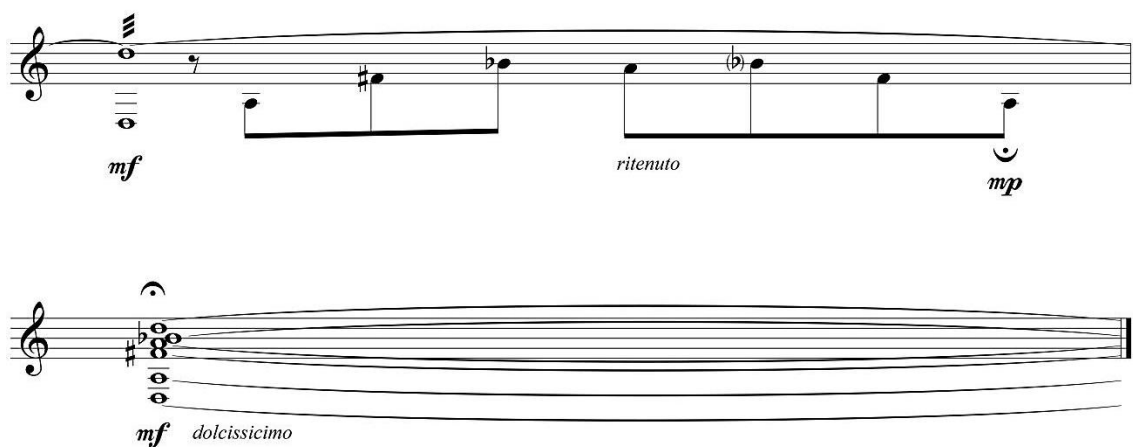
Figure 151: Rasgueado technique used in *Fire*



6. EARTH

This section has a multi-layer texture moving in a parallel motion, depicting a mixture of all elements in the process of forming the Earth. The texture is based on a palette of ten chords in a moveable shape which are to be connected randomly in performance. These chords are strummed heavily, moving in multi-directions with aggressive rhythm in an abrupt and destructive manner. This chaotic and uncertain progress finally ascends in heavy glissando from the lowest chord to conclude with strong tambora on a different high pitched chord, which was previously used in the climax of *Highland Dreaming*. This is followed by a slower tranquil section recapitulating the material from the first section *Space*. The composition ends on an unresolved chord suggesting the temporary stability of the Earth's formation (figure 152).

Figure 152: Temporary stability of the Earth's formation



3.3.ii Other compositions beyond Vietnamese influences

Farewell to the Mountain Forest

The earliest creative work, and a key composition beyond Vietnamese influences, tells the story of the last Javan rhinoceros in Vietnam. Written in the scordatura 'D G D G A D', there are direct idiomatic Gong music usages in this composition. Capturing the ambience of the highlanders' music, the first movement *Lost* describes the rhinoceros'

loneliness, wandering in the mountain forest looking for his species. The second movement *Farewell* contains most musical ideas beyond Vietnamese influences and features dissonant melodic material, hints of atonality and newly discovered cluster-chords and the snap pizzicato technique to describe the rhinoceros being killed by poachers. The last movement highlights the moment when the rhinoceros is reunited with his mother and species in heaven. This movement sees the return of Vietnamese idioms with a range of extended guitar techniques.

Prelude

An unusual sound ensemble for guitar consisting of Middle Eastern frame drums and Indian drone, *Prelude* has the strongest elements of improvisation and indeterminacy in all compositions in this project. The overall structure is based on the conceptual foundations of ‘Rao’ in Tài tử music and ‘Alap’ in Indian classical music. In the ‘dialogue’ with frame drums and the Indian drone, the exploration of new sound textures and musical ideas on the guitar generates both Indian and Vietnamese impressions, reminding one of the relationships between Southern Vietnamese and Indian music. Intended to be performed prior to *Gods of the Highlands* as a pair, *Prelude* has strong traces of its inspiration from Vietnamese Gong culture.

Euphoria

A dialogue between the guitar and Buddhist bells, *Euphoria* is another unique ensemble which is likely to be the first of its kind. The creative idioms are based on the multi-layers moving in parallel and extended guitar techniques to create different textures. Guitar pitch materials are actually acquired from experimental study with the pitch of the Buddhist bells. Technically, *Euphoria* is related to *Highland Dreaming* in the use of moveable chords while Indian music and Spanish guitar idioms are the source of inspiration. There are three main sections with fixed musical ideas and harmonic

framework but indeterminacy in structure, melodic and rhythmic improvisation is the main feature of this composition.

Heart of the Ocean

Inspired by the Australian Great Barrier Reef seascapes and the musical cultures of the Pacific, this creative work explores new possibilities of the new scordatura ‘D G D G A D’ without any cultural-musical confines. Leaning towards Western diatonic minor tonality, the harmonic structure is an extension of the newly-found chords acquired in the compositional process of *White Birds*. At times, there could be traces of intentional or unintentional usage of pitch materials from other Asian cultures like Japan and China. Extended instrumental techniques and unusual sound combinations of the guitar and world percussion are used to create contrast textures and to depict a narrative of life and activities under the sea.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis is a synthesis of research, composition and performance where each element is a vitally inseparable element of the other. This all contributes to the development of the final outcomes. The ethnomusicological results have been transformed into creative works with influences from Vietnamese folk songs and Tài tử music, the Gong culture, and new works beyond Vietnamese influences. The nature of this thesis has opened many opportunities to make contributions to the three areas of ethnomusicology, composition, and performance.

Contributions to the field of ethnomusicology

In the field of ethnomusicology, the process of analysing conflicting ethnomusicological findings has generated original contributions that shed new light on the changes and development of Southern Vietnamese traditional music in the late nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century. Based on both Vietnamese and French sources, my research has addressed ‘lost in translation’ Tài tử music in the semantic, social, and musical contexts. The issues were presented at the 2012 Musicological Society of Australia National Conference and a year later at the 2013 World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music in Shanghai. The discussion has also attracted attention from the wider public in Vietnam.

A new literature on Vietnamese music at the 1900 Paris World Exposition and 1906 Marseille Colonial Exposition has been discovered from the French source which provides new evidence that the first performance of Tài tử music in the West was in 1900 and later in 1906, not 1910 or 1911 as previously believed. Documents from the French primary source have suggested that Tài tử music was used to accompany dance in the theatrical production *La Bague Enchantée* which featured in a collaborative performance between Vietnamese musicians and European dancers. This

research has led to the discovery of the first Western score of Tài tử music notated by Julien Tiersot as *Danse de l'Indo-chine* which contains traces of a repertoire of Southern Vietnamese music and how it was performed at the dawn of the twentieth century. These findings have also made contributions to the study of the Vietnamese music and the French connection. There has been considerable interest and media coverage on this discovery in Vietnam, Australia, and the Vietnamese diaspora communities around the world.

International collaboration with a scholar at the Ho Chi Minh Conservatory of Music has found similarities between the Tài tử ancient repertoire and Tiersot's score. These findings shed new light on the development of Southern Vietnamese music which connects knowledge from more than a century ago to the present day. Academic papers on this topic were presented at the 2015 Musicological Society of Australia National Conference, later at the 2017 World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music in Limerick, and through a series of public lectures in Vietnam and Australia.

At the conclusion of the project, the first recording of Southern Vietnamese music was discovered in Léon Azoulay's collection of wax recordings from the 1900 Paris World Exposition. This recording illustrates evidence on the relationship between Southern Vietnamese folksong and Tài tử singing during the nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century.

Unexpectedly, the ethnomusicological research into Vietnamese traditional music to find appropriate material as a source of inspiration has also generated a contribution to the study of Southern Vietnamese music in its historical and cultural contexts which has become a reference and enhanced knowledge for an informed compositional process. In addition to publications in Vietnamese academic journals, newspapers, and a book in

collaboration with a Vietnamese-Australian scholar these ethnomusicological findings have been presented at national and international conferences with the aim of raising awareness of an Australian contribution to the study of Vietnamese music as a creative project.

Contributions to the field of composition

In the field of composition, this creative project has seen the development of the first comprehensive set of Australian guitar music with Vietnamese cultural influences, which has included a variety of compositions for solo guitar and for guitar ensembles of unusual instrumental combinations. The compositional strategy to transform the guitar as a new expressive medium has brought about various unique outcomes through the interweaving of Vietnamese folk songs and Western style music. Through this approach, based on ethnomusicological research, new creative guitar idioms are directly aligned with the Vietnamese highlanders' method of music making; enabling the guitar to be played with authentic Gong ensembles in ensemble performances. These creative works raise awareness of the Vietnamese musical culture and contextualise my original contribution to the trend of Australian music with Asian influences.

Starting in 2011, the collaborative project with the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music facilitated the development of music arrangements for ensembles of guitar and Vietnamese traditional musical instruments from compositions originally written for solo guitar. During December 2011 and 2013, *Song of the Nightingale* was arranged for guitar and three Vietnamese zithers and *Song of the South* and *White Bird* were arranged for guitar and orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music. Reflecting the Vietnamese knowledge and skills acquired from the participant-observation method and the transformational process from ethnomusicology to guitar composition these

arrangements are an original contribution to the musical interchanges between Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Selected music scores included in this thesis also reflect a contribution to methods of notation for guitar music. As discussed in the third chapter, it is necessary to notate some parts of *Highland Dreaming* in three staves to show compositional functions and to facilitate score reading. To illustrate the two layers of the staccato-harmonic duotone in *Nocturne*, guitar harmonics are notated as they sound, not an octave lower as usually found in guitar music. In *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*, diverse methods of notation are explored to display the conceptual soundscapes.

The exploration of scordaturas has revealed new harmonic and textural possibilities; options in melodic tone colour; and a different approach to multi-layer writing for the guitar to capture the ambience of Vietnamese music. The compositional process has nurtured the emergence of the new guitar technique staccato-harmonic duotone, which is an original contribution to current knowledge of guitar technique and sound production. During this project, the prominent Australian composer Larry Sitsky incorporated the staccato-harmonic duotone technique in his *Six Epigrams for guitar: illustrating Le-Tuyen Nguyen's discovery of duotones on the guitar* which was published by the Australian Music Centre in 2013. This publication highlights the application of the new compositional aspect of the staccato-harmonic technique whereby a specific fret on a guitar string is perceived as a sound source of two layers of distinctive pitches, note values, tone colours, and articulations.

Contributions to the field of performance

In the field of performance, this creative project has reached out to a national and international audience resulting in collaborative ensemble performances in

Australia, Vietnam and the United States of America. The performance of a guitar and gong ensemble at the village in the Vietnamese highlands is the first of its kind. The ensemble performances of guitar and Vietnamese traditional instruments, and guitar and percussion from Europe, Africa, India, Tibet, China, Middle East, and the Caribbean, are all original contributions to the guitar literature and instrumental ensemble music.

The collaboration with Professor Salil Sachdev from Bridgewater State University has extended a large part of my creative works for solo guitar to become ensemble works for guitar and world percussion. Appropriate percussion instruments were chosen in combination with the guitar to add texture, tone colour, ambience, compositional structures and social contexts. In this collaboration, I informed Professor Sachdev about the Vietnamese musical-social contexts, and compositional strategy, and made all the arrangements. He has made invaluable suggestions on the choice of percussion sounds for each composition. Throughout the duration of this project, our performances have reached out to both an academic audience and the wider public in Australia, Vietnam, and the United States, contributing an awareness on both sides of the Pacific to the possibilities of Australian music with Asian influences.

During 2012 and 2013, I had the opportunity to work with the staff and students and direct the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music. My arrangements for guitar and Vietnamese traditional musical instruments were performed in two concerts, 'Music Interchange' and 'Music Together' at the Conservatory Auditorium, and also at the Ho Chi Minh City Municipal Theatre. The performances received considerable interest and media coverage in Vietnamese and English. This collaborative performance is an original contribution which contextualises the "exhilarating prospect of a genuine interaction" in the Asia-Pacific

“between western-trained musicians who have become excited by the properties of non-western music and (of) musicians from non-European races who have eagerly chosen to adopt many of the techniques of the European tradition” (Covell 1967, 290).

Another highlight of this project was the collaborative performance with Vietnamese highlander musicians in their social context. After a recital at the Fine Arts Museum in January 2013, the Ho Chi Minh City Television Network proposed to make a documentary film about my music. I took this opportunity to request that my colleague Salil Sachdev also participate in this project. The journey took two days through the central mountain forest. The location was ấp Lý Lịch, xã Phú Lý, huyện Vĩnh Cửu, Đồng Nai province. The collaboration was filmed and recorded by the Ho Chi Minh City Television Network.

Our musical exchange with the Vietnamese highlanders was scheduled in the village communal house at night. The village gong ensemble included three female and two male players. At the beginning, I played all my compositions inspired by Vietnamese Gong music for them and they performed their ancient pieces. The essence of this musical exchange was the collaborative performance of my creative works with guitar and their authentic gong ensembles. I worked with Mr Năm Nổi - the village chief and music leader, to arrange *Come Together*, *Highland Dreaming* and *Gods of the Highlands*. The experience has significantly enlightened the knowledge of the ethnomusicological, compositional, and performance aspects of the creative works with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture. This collaboration is the first of its kind, where an Australian musician with a Western instrument was able to perform with Vietnamese Gong performers in their musical, social, and cultural settings.

A new voice in Australian music, this thesis is an expression of tradition, innovation and global interaction. It has been a holistic journey travelling back to the past to look

for traditional authenticity; to explore options to make the past relevant to the present in creative works; and to open up collaborations in both research and performance. Reflecting Roger Covell's vision of musical interchanges between Australia and its Asia-Pacific neighbours, this creative project provides exemplary evidence to demonstrate Anne Boyd's belief that creative ethnomusicology is "a model for a way forward in the reconciliation of cultural differences between Western and non-Western ways of thinking and the possibility of evolving new and unique musical voices" (Boyd 2005, 99).

APPENDIX I:

MUSIC SCORES

Music scores of selected creative works are included in this thesis. They are notated as the original compositional ideas for solo guitar; there might be variations in the various recordings which reflect the development, changes, and amendment for ensemble work in many stages of this creative project. The music notation software ‘Finale’ version 2011 was used to notate all music scores.

Song of the South

Based on the Vietnamese folk song 'Lý con sáo'

⑥ = D

Andante Cantabile Expressivo

mp

mf *rubato*

mf *cantabile* *vibrato.....*

tristamente *dolce*

malinconia *mp* *cresc.*

Song of the South page 2

21

mf *rubato*

25

a tempo
mp *leggero* *mf* *cantabile*

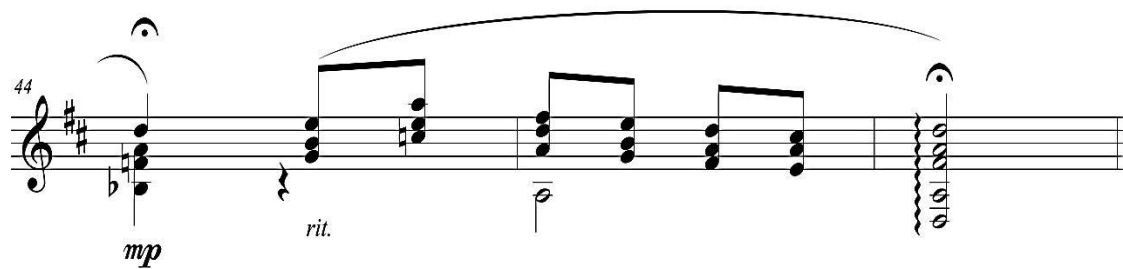
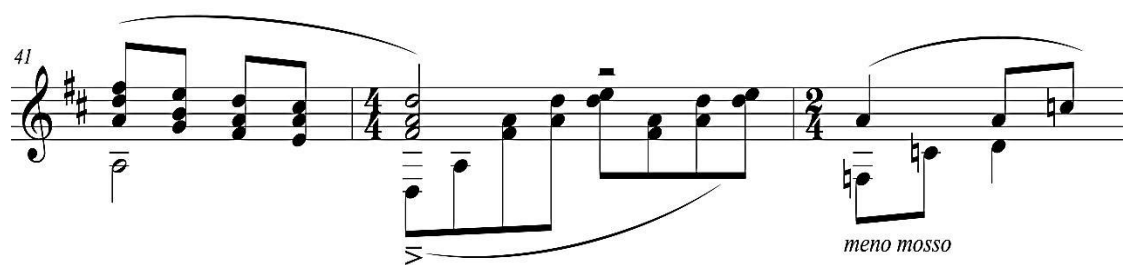
29

33

mp

37

Song of the South page 3

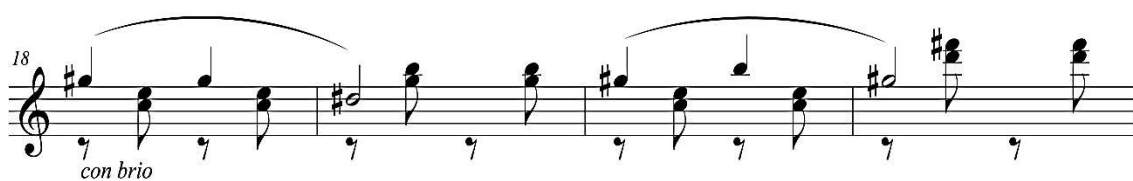
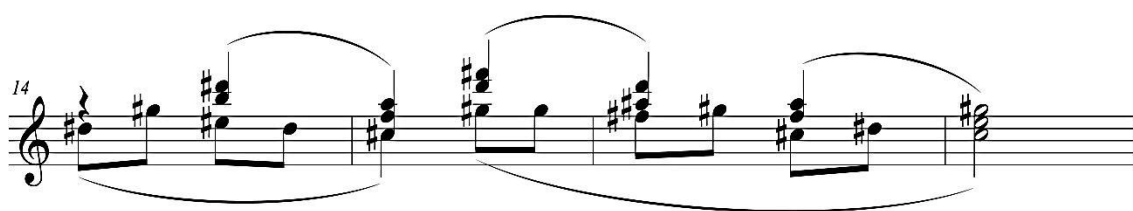
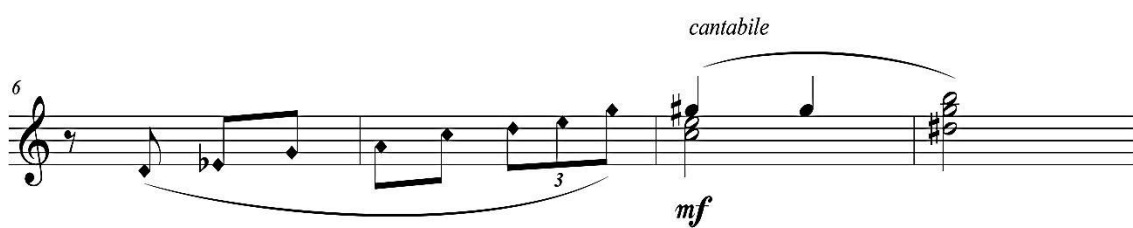
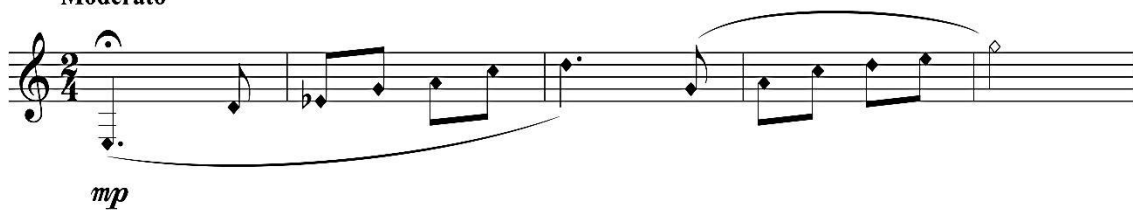


Song of the Nightingale

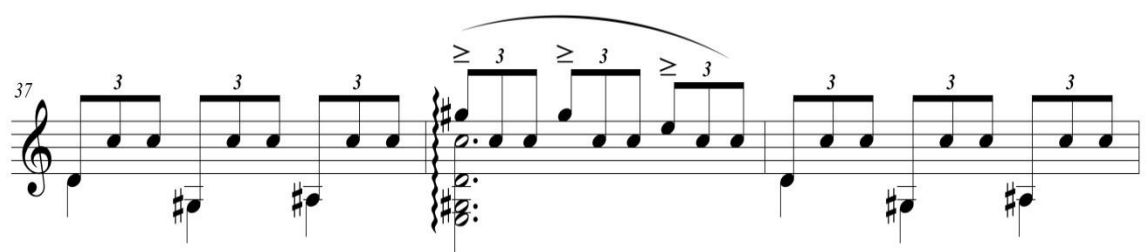
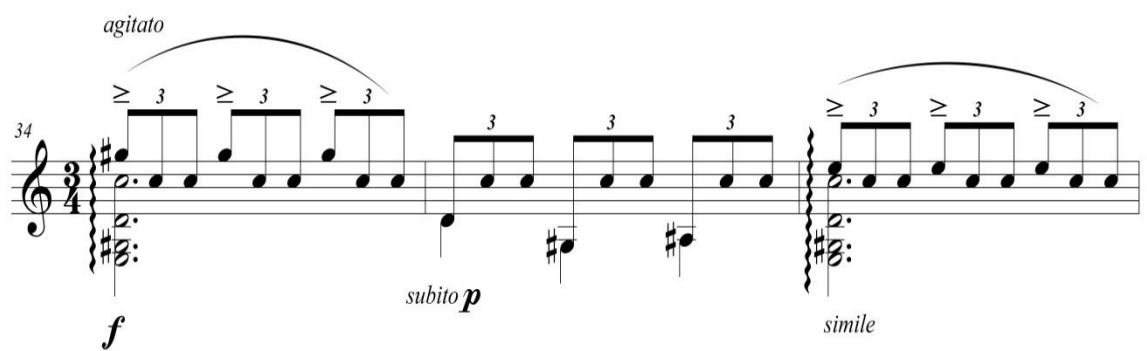
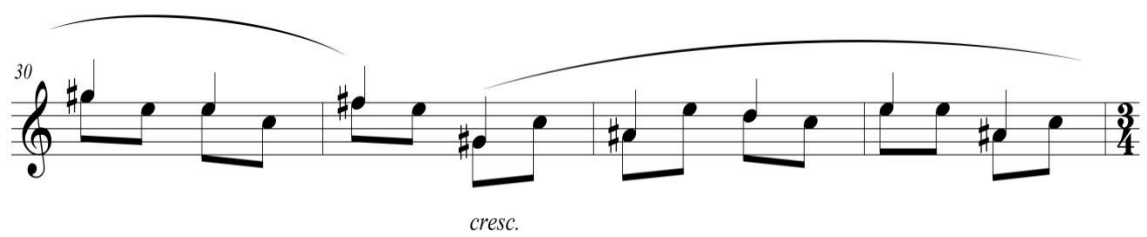
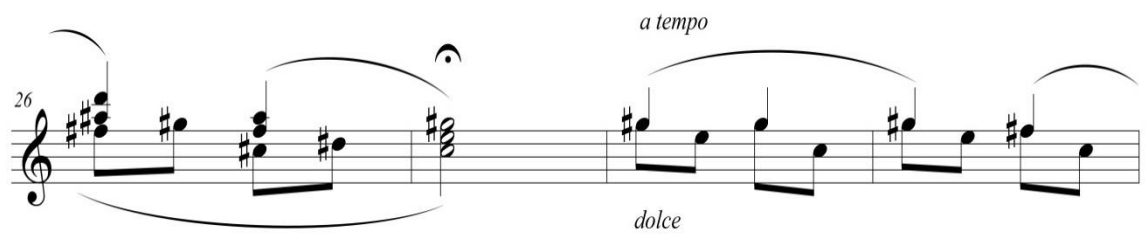
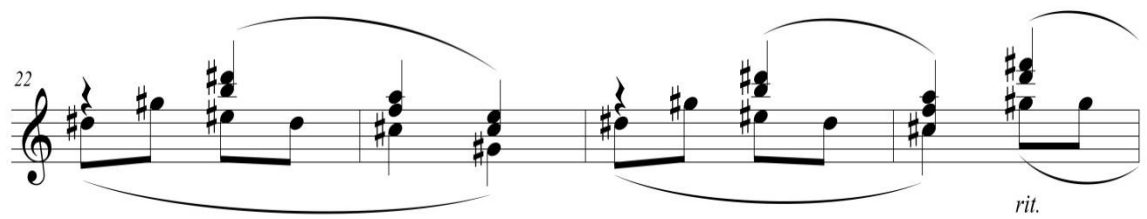
Based on the Vietnamese folk song 'Lý chim quyên'

⑤ = G# ② = C

Moderato



Song of the Nightingale page 2



Song of the Nightingale page 3

40

40

43

43

46

46

marcato

accel.

48

48

rubato

51

51

leggero

mf

Song of the Nightingale page 4

54

54 55 56

57

rubato

dim.

sfz

ppp

57 58

59

mf

59 60

61

cresc.

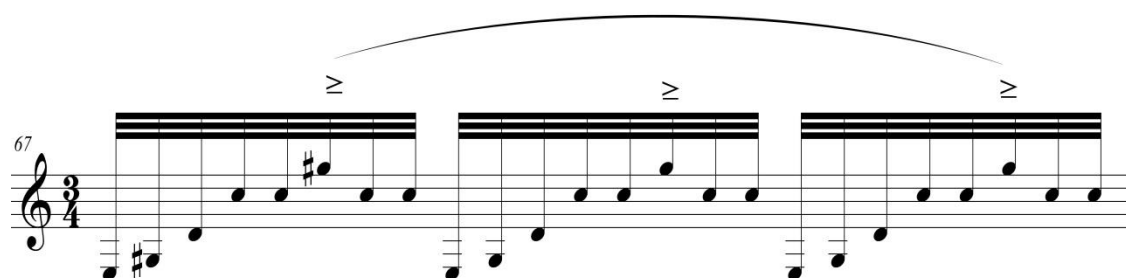
61 62

63

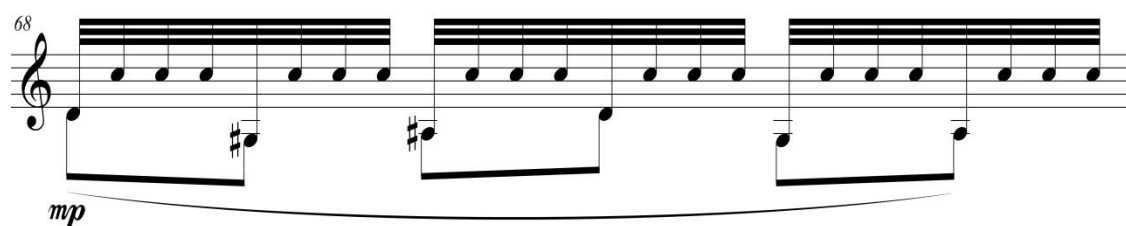
ff

63 64 65

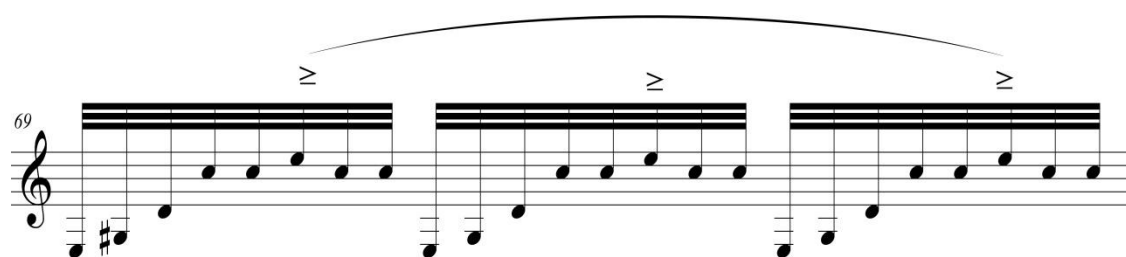
Song of the Nightingale page 5



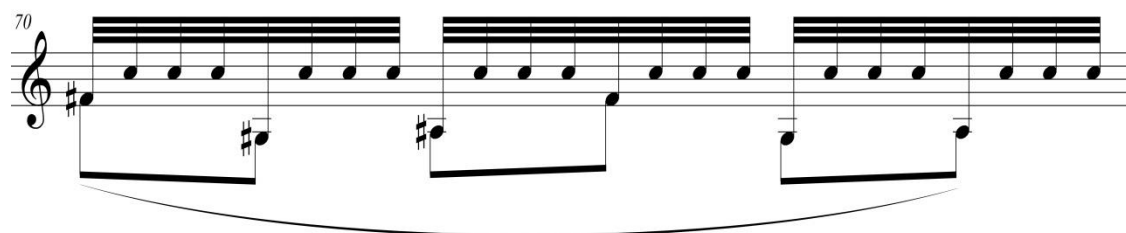
fff



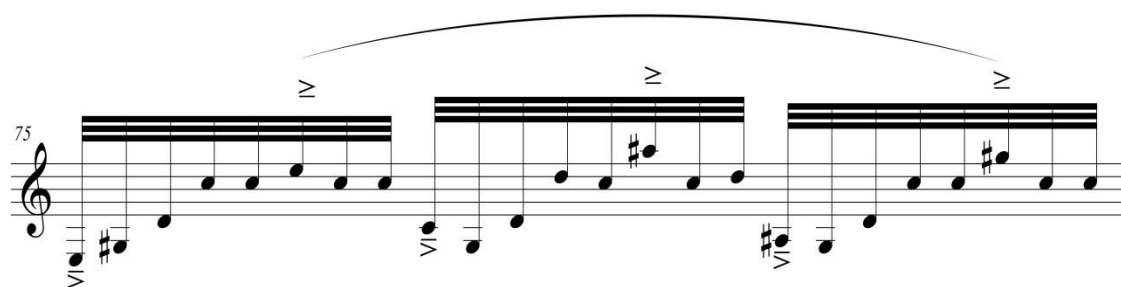
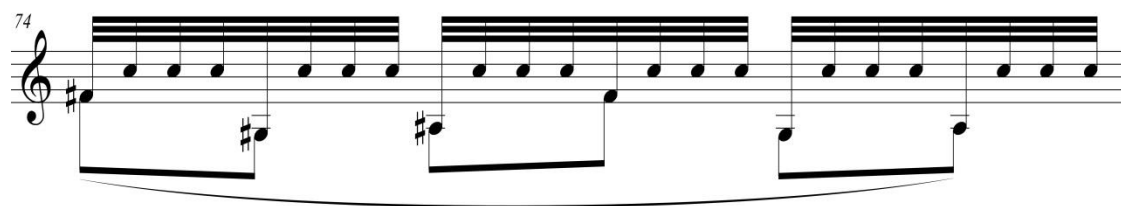
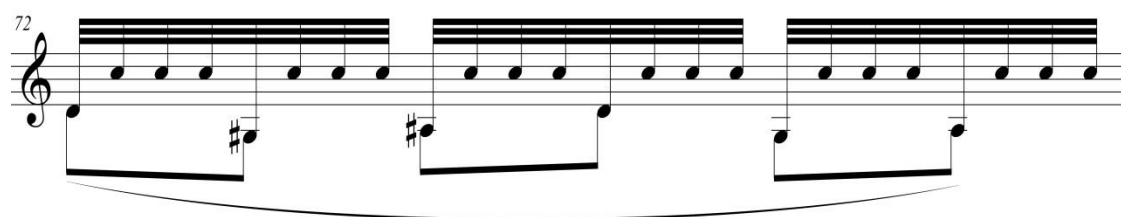
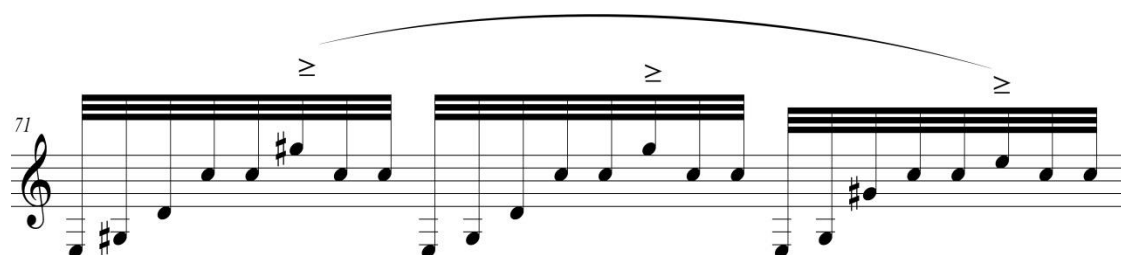
mp



simile



Song of the Nightingale page 6



Song of the Nightingale page 7

76

Musical notation for measure 76. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes. A slur covers the first three groups of eighth notes, each marked with an accent (>). The bass line consists of quarter notes.

77

Musical notation for measure 77. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes. A slur covers the first three groups of eighth notes. The bass line consists of quarter notes.

78

Musical notation for measure 78. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes. A slur covers the first three groups of eighth notes, each marked with an accent (>). The bass line consists of quarter notes.

79

Musical notation for measure 79. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes. A slur covers the first three groups of eighth notes. The bass line consists of quarter notes.

ff *cresc.*

80

Musical notation for measure 80. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes. A slur covers the first three groups of eighth notes. The bass line consists of quarter notes.

rubato

fff

Song of the Nightingale page 8

81

a tempo

vibrato

mp

84

ppp

pppp

Highland Dreaming

Creative work with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture

⑥ = D ⑤ = G ② = A ① = D

Andante cantabile ♩ = ca 92

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Andante cantabile' with a quarter note equal to approximately 92 beats per minute. The score consists of five staves of music, each containing three measures. The first staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second staff starts at measure 4. The third staff starts at measure 7 and includes a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. The fourth staff starts at measure 10 and includes a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The fifth staff starts at measure 13. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together in groups of four, with some measures featuring a half note. The piece concludes with a final half note on the fifth staff.

Highland Dreaming page 2

16

cresc. *f*

②

mp

③

mp

④

mp

mp

Highland Dreaming page 3

The musical score for "Highland Dreaming" page 3 consists of three systems, each containing three staves. The key signature is D major (two sharps). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs. Dynamics and articulations are indicated throughout the piece.

System 1:

- Staff 1: *cresc.*
- Staff 2: *cresc.*
- Staff 3: *cresc.*, *mf*

System 2:

- Staff 1: *cresc.*, *f*, *fz*, *dim.*
- Staff 2: *cresc.*, *f*, *fz*, *dim.*
- Staff 3: *cresc.*, *f*, *fz*, *dim.*

System 3:

- Staff 1: *mf*, *cresc.*
- Staff 2: *mf*, *cresc.*
- Staff 3: *mf*, *cresc.*

Highland Dreaming page 4

The musical score for 'Highland Dreaming' page 4 consists of eight systems of staves. Each system typically contains a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in the key of D major (two sharps). The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, slurs, and ornaments. Dynamics are indicated throughout, including *f* (forte), *ff* (fortissimo), and *cresc.* (crescendo). Fingerings are marked with circled numbers 1 through 6. The score is written in a style typical of traditional Scottish bagpipe music transcriptions.

Three staves of musical notation. The first two staves are treble clef, and the third is bass clef. All are in D major. The first two staves feature a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, accented, with dynamics *fff* and *dim.* The third staff features a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, accented, with dynamics *fff* and *dim.*

Four staves of musical notation. The first staff is treble clef, and the other three are bass clef. All are in D major. The first staff features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, accented, with dynamics *mp*, *cresc.*, and *mf*. The second staff features a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, accented, with dynamics *cresc.* and *f*. The third staff features a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, accented, with dynamics *dim.* The fourth staff features a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, accented, with dynamics *mp*, *cresc.*, and *mf*.

Highland Dreaming page 6

②

mp

③

⑤

mp

①

④

⑥

mp

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

mf

Highland Dreaming page 7

The musical score for "Highland Dreaming" page 7 consists of three systems, each with three staves. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1:**
 - Staff 1: *cresc.*, *f*, *fz*, *dim.*
 - Staff 2: *cresc.*, *f*, *fz*, *dim.*
 - Staff 3: *cresc.*, *f*, *fz*, *dim.*
- System 2:**
 - Staff 1: *mf*, *cresc.*
 - Staff 2: *mf*, *cresc.*
 - Staff 3: *mf*, *cresc.*
- System 3:**
 - Staff 1: *cresc.*, ①
 - Staff 2: ③, *cresc.*, ⑤
 - Staff 3: ②, ④, ⑥, *cresc.*

Highland Dreaming page 8

The musical score for 'Highland Dreaming' page 8 consists of 10 staves of music in D major (two sharps). The notation includes various musical symbols such as treble clefs, key signatures, notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *fff* (fortississimo), with crescendos and decrescendos indicated. The music is characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often with accents and slurs. The score is arranged in a single system with 10 staves.

Staff 1: *f* *cresc.*

Staff 2: *f* *cresc.*

Staff 3: *f* *cresc.*

Staff 4: *ff* *cresc.*

Staff 5: *ff* *cresc.*

Staff 6: *ff* *cresc.*

Staff 7: *fff* *dim.*

Staff 8: *fff* *dim.*

Staff 9: *fff* *dim.*

Highland Dreaming page 9

The musical score for "Highland Dreaming" page 9 is written for piano and guitar. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into five systems of music.

System 1: The piano part begins with a series of chords, marked *mp*. The guitar part enters with a melody, marked *cresc.* and *mf*.

System 2: The piano part continues with a melody, marked *cresc.* and *f*. The guitar part provides harmonic support.

System 3: The piano part continues with a melody, marked *dim.*. The guitar part provides harmonic support.

System 4: The piano part continues with a melody, marked *mp*, *cresc.*, and *mf*. The guitar part provides harmonic support.

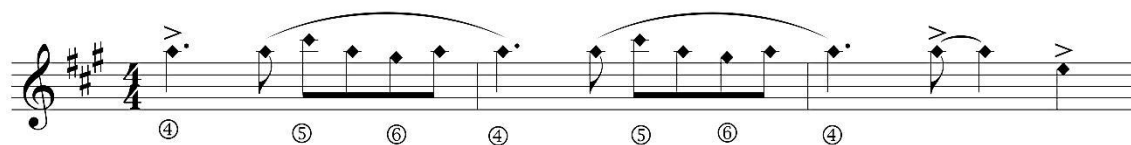
System 5: The piano part concludes with a series of chords, marked *mp* and *p*. The guitar part provides harmonic support.

Nocturne

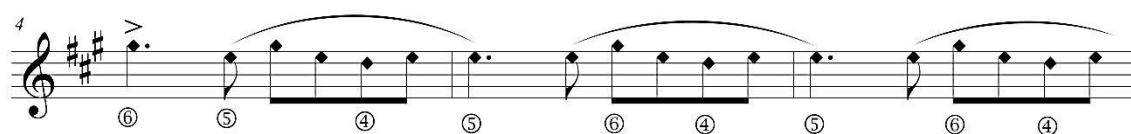
Creative work with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture

Featuring the new guitar technique Staccato-harmonic duotone

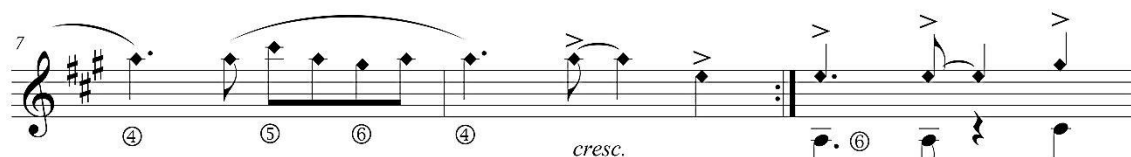
Andante



mp

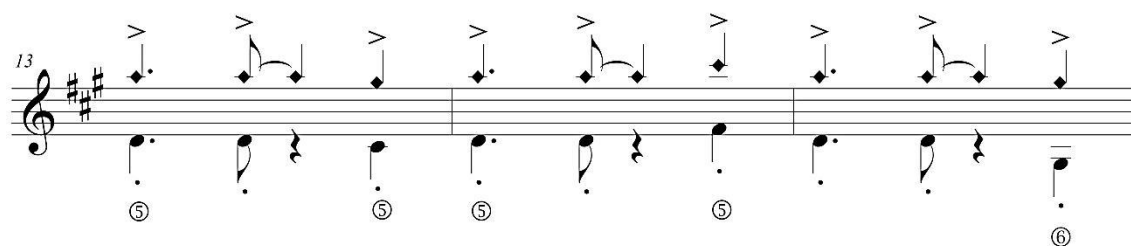
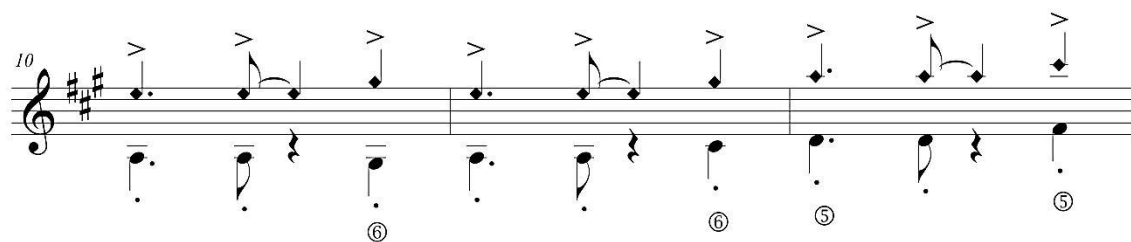


Staccato-harmonic duotone



cresc.

f



Nocturne page 2

Natural harmonics

16

mp

⑥

19

22

cresc.

Staccato-harmonic duotone

25

f

28

Nocturne page 3

31

34

37

Natural harmonics

40

ff

43

Call of the Mountain Forest

Creative work with influences from the Vietnamese Gong culture

⑥ = D ⑤ = G ② = A ① = D

Maestoso

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff in D major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of five staves of music, with measures numbered 1 through 13. The tempo is marked 'Maestoso'. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth and quarter notes, rests, and slurs. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) at measure 1, *f* (forte) at measure 7, and *mp* (mezzo-piano) at measure 12. A crescendo marking 'cresc.' is placed between measures 6 and 7. The piece concludes with a final *mf* marking at measure 13.

Call of the Mountain Forest page 2

16 *espress.*
mf
cresc.
mp
mf
rubato
f

Call of the Mountain Forest page 3

31

mf *cresc.* *f*

34

mp *mf* *mp*

37

mf *cresc.* *f*

40

mp *mf* *mp*

43

f *mp*

Call of the Mountain Forest page 4

46

cresc.

mf

49

mf

52

mf

55

mp

mf

58

mf

Call of the Mountain Forest page 5

61

mf

64

mp *cresc.*

67

rubato *a tempo* *f*

70

cresc.

73

ff *mf*

Call of the Mountain Forest page 6

76

mf

79

cresc. *f*

82

mf

85

cresc. *f*

88

f

Call of the Mountain Forest page 7

91

f

cresc.

94

ff

Dawn of the Mountain Forest

The creation of Earth

⑥ = D ⑤ = G ② = A ① = D

Space

The musical score for "Space" consists of three systems of staves. The first system features a treble staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a *fff* dynamic and includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) and *dim.* (diminuendo) marking. A blue box highlights a *legato* passage in the middle staff, starting with a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The bottom staff shows a complex, multi-measure rest with a *fff* dynamic. The second system begins with a *mp* dynamic and includes a *cresc.* and *agitato* marking. A white box highlights a *rubato* passage in the middle staff. The bottom staff features a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic and a complex, multi-measure rest. The third system continues the *mf* dynamic and includes a *mf* marking.

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 2

First system of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and an *espress.* (expressive) marking. A long slur covers the first three measures. The second staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a *pesante* (heavy) marking. A box highlights the first three measures. The third staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a *con brio* (with spirit) marking. A box highlights the first three measures. Arrows point from the *mf* and *pesante* markings in the second staff to the corresponding markings in the third staff.

Second system of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and an *espress.* (expressive) marking. A long slur covers the first three measures. The second staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and an *energico* (energetic) marking. A box highlights the first three measures. The third staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. A box highlights the first three measures. Arrows point from the *f* and *energico* markings in the second staff to the corresponding markings in the third staff.

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 3

The musical score consists of three systems, each with three staves. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff has a fermata over a whole note, followed by a measure with a fermata. The second staff has a fermata over a whole note, followed by a measure with a fermata. The third staff has a fermata over a whole note, followed by a measure with a fermata. The first system is marked *piu vivo*. The second system is marked *mp* and *sostenuto*. The third system is marked *sfz*. The fourth system is marked *cresc.* and *meno mosso*. The fifth system is marked *mp* and *mf*. The sixth system is marked *sf* and *con brio*. The seventh system is marked *sfz*. The eighth system is marked *sfz*. The ninth system is marked *sfz*. The tenth system is marked *sfz*. The eleventh system is marked *sfz*. The twelfth system is marked *sfz*. The thirteenth system is marked *sfz*. The fourteenth system is marked *sfz*. The fifteenth system is marked *sfz*. The sixteenth system is marked *sfz*. The seventeenth system is marked *sfz*. The eighteenth system is marked *sfz*. The nineteenth system is marked *sfz*. The twentieth system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-first system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-second system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-third system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-fourth system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-fifth system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-sixth system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-seventh system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-eighth system is marked *sfz*. The twenty-ninth system is marked *sfz*. The thirtieth system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-first system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-second system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-third system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-fourth system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-fifth system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-sixth system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-seventh system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-eighth system is marked *sfz*. The thirty-ninth system is marked *sfz*. The fortieth system is marked *sfz*. The forty-first system is marked *sfz*. The forty-second system is marked *sfz*. The forty-third system is marked *sfz*. The forty-fourth system is marked *sfz*. The forty-fifth system is marked *sfz*. The forty-sixth system is marked *sfz*. The forty-seventh system is marked *sfz*. The forty-eighth system is marked *sfz*. The forty-ninth system is marked *sfz*. The fiftieth system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-first system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-second system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-third system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-fourth system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-fifth system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-sixth system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-seventh system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-eighth system is marked *sfz*. The fifty-ninth system is marked *sfz*. The sixtieth system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-first system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-second system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-third system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-fourth system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-fifth system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-sixth system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-seventh system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-eighth system is marked *sfz*. The sixty-ninth system is marked *sfz*. The seventieth system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-first system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-second system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-third system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-fourth system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-fifth system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-sixth system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-seventh system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-eighth system is marked *sfz*. The seventy-ninth system is marked *sfz*. The eightieth system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-first system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-second system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-third system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-fourth system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-fifth system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-sixth system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-seventh system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-eighth system is marked *sfz*. The eighty-ninth system is marked *sfz*. The ninetieth system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-first system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-second system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-third system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-fourth system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-fifth system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-sixth system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-seventh system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-eighth system is marked *sfz*. The ninety-ninth system is marked *sfz*. The hundredth system is marked *sfz*.

piu vivo

misterioso

mp

sfz

cresc.

sostenuto

con brio

mp

mf

sf

meno mosso

Air

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system features a woodwind part (flute or oboe) with a melodic line starting on a whole note, marked *sfz* and *con calore*, then transitioning to a tremolo pattern marked *legatissimo* and *ff*. A string part provides a tremolo accompaniment marked *duo tremolo* and *mf*. The second system shows a woodwind part with a tremolo pattern marked *sfz* and *duo tremolo*. The third system features a woodwind part with a tremolo pattern marked *rinforzando* and *ff*, and a string part with a tremolo pattern marked *string scratching* and *molto crescendo*. The score includes various musical notations such as treble clefs, key signatures, and dynamic markings.

① ② ③

con calore

sfz

legatissimo

ff

duo tremolo

mf

④ ⑤ ⑥

sfz

duo tremolo

rinforzando

ff

string scratching

molto crescendo

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 5

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is a grand staff with two systems of three staves each. The first system includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 3/4. The first staff of the first system has a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The second staff of the first system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The third staff of the first system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The second system of the first staff has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The second staff of the second system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The third staff of the second system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The fourth staff of the second system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The first staff of the third system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The second staff of the third system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The third staff of the third system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The fourth staff of the third system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The first staff of the fourth system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The second staff of the fourth system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The third staff of the fourth system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*. The fourth staff of the fourth system has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *animato*.

ff *animato* *animato*

rinforzando *f*

brillante *f* *piu brillante* *molto brillante* *ff*

sffz

rinforzando

ff *molto crescendo*

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 6

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is a grand staff with three parts: a treble clef part with triplets and a *ff* dynamic, a middle part with a *f* dynamic and a *rinforzando* marking, and a bass part with a *sffz* dynamic. The second staff continues the first part with *animato* markings. The third staff features a *brillante* section with a *f* dynamic, followed by *piu brillante* and *molto brillante* sections with *ff* dynamics. The fourth staff begins with a *mf* *un poco lento* marking, followed by a *marcato il basso* section with a *ff* dynamic and *ad libitum* marking, and a *perdendosi* section with a *fp* dynamic.

Staff 1: *ff*, *rinforzando*, *f*, *sffz*

Staff 2: *animato*, *animato*

Staff 3: *brillante*, *f*, *piu brillante*, *molto brillante*, *ff*

Staff 4: *mf* *un poco lento*, *marcato il basso*, *ff*, *ad libitum*, *fp*, *perdendosi*

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 7

legatissimo ad libitum

ff marcato il basso *molto pesante* *sfz*

ff *molto agitato* *molto crescendo* *fff*

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 8

System 1:

- Staff 1: Piano introduction with triplets, *ff*, *animato*, *animato*.
- Staff 2: Melody starting with *f*, *rinforzando*.
- Staff 3: *brillante*, *f*, *piu brillante*, *molto brillante ff*.
- Staff 4: Continuous line with *sff₃*.

System 2:

- Staff 1: Piano introduction with triplets.
- Staff 2: Melody starting with *mf un poco lento*.
- Staff 3: *ff*, *ad libitum*, *fp*, *perdendosi*. Includes a box labeled *marcato il basso* containing a wavy line and a sharp sign.
- Staff 4: Continuous line with *mf*.

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 9

legatissimo ad libitum

ff marcato il basso *molto pesante* *animato* *sffz*

Note:

This space is left blank intentionally to allow the next
section starting at the beginning of page.

Light

Maestoso

con brio

mp

mf

mf

mf

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 11

5

5

cresc.

VI

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 and 6. The upper staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measures 5 and 6 feature a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) with an accent (>) and a slur. The lower staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 6 features a half note G4 with a slur. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 7/8. A 'VI' symbol is positioned below the lower staff.

6

6

VI

Detailed description: This system contains measures 6 and 7. The upper staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measures 6 and 7 feature a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) with an accent (>) and a slur. The lower staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 7 features a half note G4 with a slur. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 7/8. A 'VI' symbol is positioned below the lower staff.

7

7

f

VI

Detailed description: This system contains measures 7 and 8. The upper staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measures 7 and 8 feature a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) with an accent (>) and a slur. The lower staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 8 features a half note G4 with a slur. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 7/8. A 'VI' symbol is positioned below the lower staff.

8

8

simile

VI

Detailed description: This system contains measures 8 and 9. The upper staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measures 8 and 9 feature a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) with an accent (>) and a slur. The lower staff (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 9 features a half note G4 with a slur. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 7/8. A 'VI' symbol is positioned below the lower staff.

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 12

Measures 9 and 10 of the piece. The top staff (treble clef) features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together, and a final dotted quarter note. The bottom staff (treble clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. Both staves are in the key of D major (two sharps). Measure numbers 9 and 10 are indicated at the start of their respective staves.

Measures 10 and 11 of the piece. The top staff continues the melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some triplets. The bottom staff continues the eighth-note accompaniment. Measure numbers 10 and 11 are indicated at the start of their respective staves.

Measures 11 and 12 of the piece. The top staff features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together, and a final dotted quarter note. The bottom staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. Both staves are in the key of D major (two sharps). Measure numbers 11 and 12 are indicated at the start of their respective staves. The word "cresc." is written above the bottom staff in measure 11.

Measures 12 and 13 of the piece. The top staff continues the melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some triplets. The bottom staff continues the eighth-note accompaniment. Measure numbers 12 and 13 are indicated at the start of their respective staves.

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 13

13 *grazioso*

f

14

brillante

15

f *cresc.*

16

ff *piu vivo*

17

f

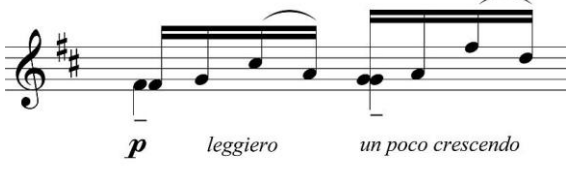
18

ff *con calore* *cresc.*

19

Water

dolcissimo



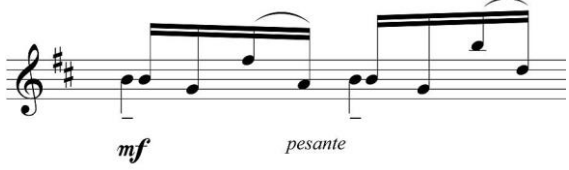
p *leggiero* *un poco crescendo*



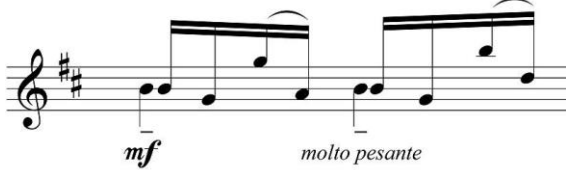
mp *poco a poco crescendo*



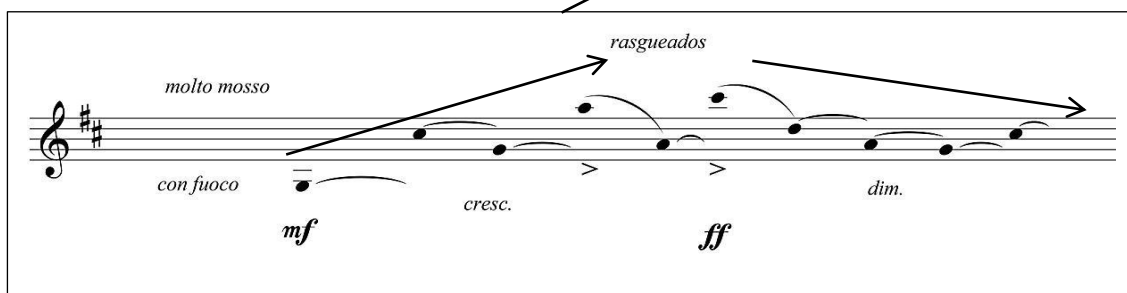
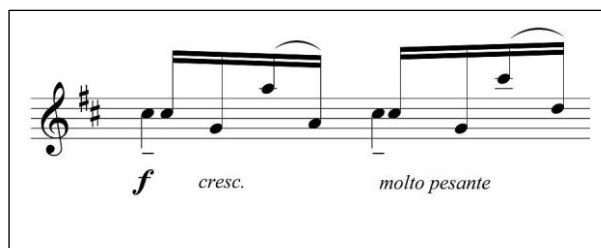
mf *con energico* *un poco pesante*



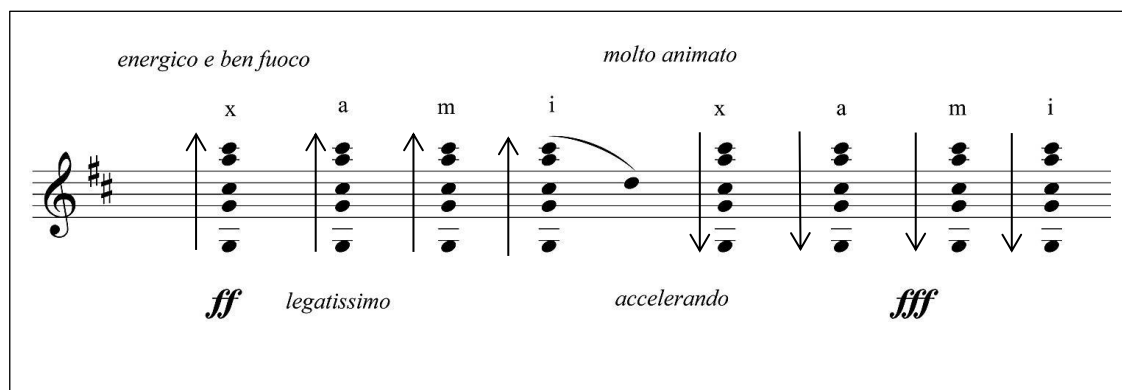
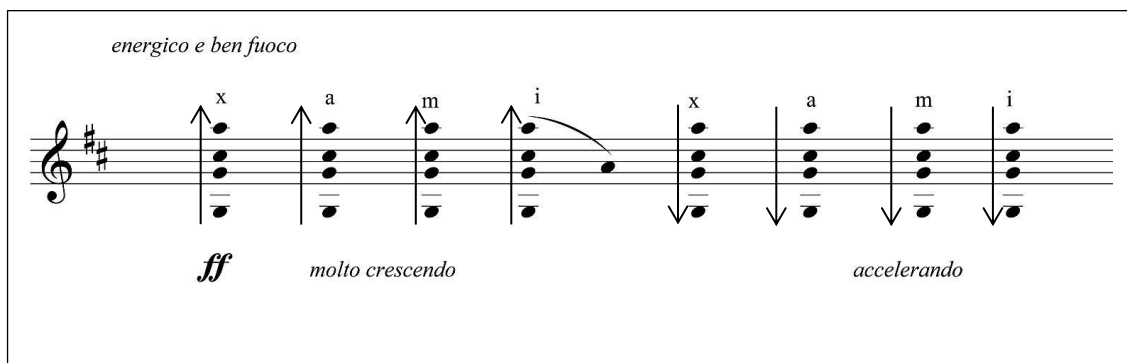
mf *pesante*



mf *molto pesante*



Fire



Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 16

con calore estremo

tamb. tamb. x a m i tamb. tamb. tamb. tamb. tamb. x a m i

ff sfffz ff sfffz

tamb. tamb. x a m i tamb. tamb. tamb. tamb. tamb. x a m i

ff sfffz ff sfffz

con calore estremo

tamb. tamb. x a m i tamb. tamb. tamb. tamb. tamb. x a m i

ff sfffz ff sfffz

tamb. tamb. x a m i tamb. tamb. tamb. tamb. tamb. x a m i

ff sfffz ff sfffz

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 17

tamb. > *ff* tamb. > *fffz* x a m i > *ff* tamb. > *fffz* tamb. > tamb. > tamb. > tamb. > x a m i >

rasgueados *energico caotico*
x a m i x a m i *sempre*

Diagram illustrating a musical structure with six boxes of musical notation, connected by lines, and a sequence of arrows above them.

Earth

Vivace

The circular diagram consists of 10 musical staves, each containing a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staves are connected by lines in a sequence that moves clockwise. The top staff is labeled 'Vivace'. Below the circle, an arrow points down to a larger musical staff.

rinforzando

ff *poco a poco* *ffff*

tamb.

Dawn of the Mountain Forest page 19

Lento

misterioso

pp *crescendo* *diminuendo*

44 *mf*

mp

mf *ritenuto* *mp*

mf *dolcissimo*

APPENDIX II:

RECORDINGS

The studio and live recordings of creative works are attached with this thesis in three collections: (1) guitar and world percussion, (2) guitar and Vietnamese musical instruments, and (3) solo creative works. Contents and details in reference to those recordings are provided in this section. The total time is three hours.

Guitar and world percussion

Studio recording

Performers: Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. Location: the Recording Studio, Australian National University School of Music. Recorded and mixed by Samantha Bennett. Date: July 2014. Compositions and arrangements by Le-Tuyen Nguyen. Euphoria and Prelude composed by Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev.

1. **Call of the Mountain Forest:** guitar and hang drum
2. **Highland Dreaming:** guitar and hang drum
3. **Euphoria:** guitar and Buddhist bells
4. **Song of the South:** guitar and frame drums
5. **Prelude and Gods of the Highlands:** guitar, Indian drone machine and frame drum
6. **Come Together:** guitar, frame drums, water drum, gongs, foot jingles, djembe, and Moroccan bongos
7. **Nocturne:** guitar and Moroccan bongos
8. **Sunset:** guitar and hang drum
9. **Dawn of the Mountain Forest:** guitar and frame drums, water drum, Tibetan gongs, Moroccan bongos
10. **Moonlight:** guitar and Tibetan gong
11. **White Bird:** guitar and hang drum
12. **Fantasia:** guitar and Moroccan bongos

13. **Heart of the Ocean:** guitar, frame drums, water drum, Tibetan gongs and Moroccan bongos

14. Lecture-Recital Live Recording

Performers: Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. Location: Horace Mann Auditorium, Bridgewater State University. Date: 11th October 2011. Compositions and arrangements by Le-Tuyen Nguyen. Live recordings by Bridgewater State University.

0:00 **Call of the Mountain Forest:** guitar and hang drum

3:33 **Highland Dreaming:** guitar and hang drum

7:50 **Nocturne:** guitar and African water drum

11:08 **Moonlight:** guitar and Tibetan gong

13:25 **Come Together:** guitar, frame drums, water drum, gongs, foot jingles, djembe and Moroccan bongos

17:13 **Love Song** (*Song of the South*): solo vocal, guitar and frame drums

19:36 **Sunset:** solo vocal, guitar and djembe

22:13 **Chanson du Sud** *Homage to Debussy*: solo vocal and solo guitar

26:05 **Gods of the Highlands:** guitar and frame drums

30:00 **White Bird:** guitar and hang drum

Notes: In collaboration with Professor Salil Sachdev of Bridgewater State University, the main functions of world percussion in the creative works are:

- i. *Call of the Mountain Forest and Highland Dreaming*: Both sides of the hang drum are explored to add texture, ambience, and recreate the tone colour of the gongs.
- ii. *Song of the South*: The jingles at the introduction depict the ‘flying bird’; the frame drums add rhythmic feel and texture.
- iii. *Prelude*: The frame drums are used in a musical dialogue with the guitar.
- iv. *Gods of the Highlands*: The frame drums represent the Vietnamese large drum in Gong ensemble music, and also incorporate Vietnamese drum rhythmic features.
- v. *Come Together*: Djembe, foot jingles, and rattles add various textures and rhythmic complexity to reflect the atmosphere of the highlanders’ festivals.
- vi. *Nocturne*: Both Moroccan bongos and water drums have been used in different performances to add texture to the ambience of nocturnal highlands.
- vii. *Sunset*: The hang drum captures the tranquil ambience of the Mekong Delta.
- viii. *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*: A range of percussion instruments and techniques is used to add various textures to represent the elements and the structure in the creation of earth. Percussion used includes the Tibetan gong, frame drums, water drums, and Moroccan bongos, whereby percussion rhythmic features and techniques correspond with the guitar.
- ix. *Moonlight*: The Tibetan gong adds ambience and recreates a miniature tone colour of the Vietnamese gongs.
- x. *White Bird*: The hang drum adds texture and a counter melody to the main melody.
- xi. *Fantasia*: Moroccan bongos recreate the Vietnamese rice drum and add rhythmic complexity.
- xii. *Heart of the Ocean*: A range of percussion instruments and techniques is used to reflect structures and add textures to depict the movements of the ocean, including the frame drums, water drums, Tibetan and Chinese gongs, and Moroccan bongos.

Guitar and Vietnamese musical instruments

Guitar and Chơ-Ro Gong Ensemble

Performers: Le-Tuyen Nguyen, guitar; Chơ-Ro Gong Ensemble directed by Chief Năm Nổi, the Head musician/Head of village; and Salil Sachdev, percussion. Location: Ấp Lý Lịch, Xã Phú Lý, Huyện Vĩnh Cửu, Tỉnh Đồng Nai Vietnam. Date: January 2013. Compositions and arrangements by Le-Tuyen Nguyen. *Gods of the Highlands, Come Together*, and *Highland Dreaming* arranged by Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Chơ-Ro Gong Ensemble..

Guitar was tuned to match the gong ensemble. The scordatura D G D G A D was tuned slightly higher between about thirty five cents to forty cents as indicated on the guitar tuner BOSS TU-80. Live recording by Ho Chi Minh City Television. Permission to use the soundtracks by Ms Việt Oanh, the film producer of the Ho Chi Minh City Television.

1. 0.00 – 6:00: **Introduction to Chơ-Ro Gong Ensemble** Năm Nổi

6:01 – 9:45 **Call of the Mountain Forest**, Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev

10:41 – 14:50 **Highland Dreaming**, Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev

14:55 – 16:39 Performance by the Chơ-Ro Gong Ensemble

16:40 – 19:25 **Gods of the Highlands** Le-Tuyen Nguyen, Salil Sachdev and Chơ-Ro Gong Ensemble

19:30 – 23:43 **Come Together** Le-Tuyen Nguyen, Salil Sachdev and Chơ-Ro Gong Ensemble

2. **Highland Dreaming:** Le-Tuyen Nguyen, Salil Sachdev and Chơ-Ro Gong Ensemble

Guitar and orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music

Performers: Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music Orchestra of Vietnamese Music Instruments. Location: Concert Hall, the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music, 112 Nguyen Du Street Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam. Date: January 2012. Compositions and arrangements by Le-Tuyen Nguyen. Live recording by HCMC Conservatory of Music. Used by permission.

3. White Bird: guitar and orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music

0:00 Introduction and discussion

1:25 Performance

4. Song of the South: guitar and orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music

5. Sunset: guitar and three Vietnamese zithers

0:00 Introduction

1:15 Performance

Solo creative works

Performer: Le-Tuyen Nguyen. Location: The Recording Studio, The Australian National University School of Music. Recorded and mixed by Samantha Bennett. Dates: July 2014 and October/November 2017. Compositions and arrangements by Le-Tuyen Nguyen.

1. Lý con sáo vocal

2. Song of the South guitar

3. Song of the South guitar and vocal

4. Lý chim khuyên vocal

5. Song of the Nightingale guitar

6. Cò lả vocal

7. **White Bird** guitar
8. **Lý ngô đồng & Lý chiều chiều** vocal
9. **Sunset** guitar
10. **Trống cơm** vocal
11. **Fantasia** guitar
12. **Hát hội trăng rằm** vocal
13. **Song of the Moon** guitar
14. **Call of the Mountain Forest** guitar
15. **Highland Dreaming** guitar
16. **Nocturne** guitar
17. **Gods of the Highlands** guitar
18. **Come Together** guitar
19. **Moonlight** guitar
20. **Farewell to the Mountain Forest** guitar
 - 0:00 Lost
 - 1:53 Farewell
 - 5:03 Heaven

21. Staccato-harmonic duotones on bass strings (music notation of staccato-harmonic duotones on bass strings is provide in Appendix V, page 283)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 21.1 Sixth string fourth fret | 21.9 Fifth string ninth fret |
| 21.2 Sixth string fifth fret | 21.10 Fifth string twelfth fret |
| 21.3 Sixth string seventh fret | 21.11 Fourth string fourth fret |
| 21.4 Sixth string ninth fret | 21.12 Fourth string fifth fret |
| 21.5 Sixth string twelfth fret | 21.13 Fourth string seventh fret |
| 21.6 Fifth string fourth fret | 21.14 Fourth string ninth fret |
| 21.7 Fifth string fifth fret | 21.15 Fourth string twelfth fret |
| 21.8 Fifth string seventh fret | |

22. Staccato-harmonic duotones on treble strings guitar (music notation of the staccato-harmonic duotones on treble strings is provide in Appendix V, page 284)

22.1 Third string fourth fret

22.2 Third string fifth fret

22.3 Third string seventh fret

22.4 Third string ninth fret

22.5 Third string twelfth fret

22.6 Second string fourth fret

22.7 Second string fifth fret

22.8 Second string seventh fret

22.9 Second string ninth fret

22.10 Second string twelfth fret

22.11 First string fourth fret

22.12 First string fifth fret

22.13 First string seventh fret

22.14 First string ninth fret

22.15 First string twelfth fret

APPENDIX III:

PERFORMANCES,

POSTERS,

PROGRAMS

This section will document the solo performances and the international collaborations that occurred during the duration of this project.

List of selected public performances

2011

- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Guihangtar in concert*, Recital at University of Massachusetts, Recital Hall, Dartmouth Massachusetts USA, 13th October 2015.
- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Guihangtar in concert*, Recital at Bridgewater State University, Horace Mann Auditorium, Bridgewater USA, 18th October 2011.

2012

- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Huỳnh Khải and the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music Orchestra of Vietnamese Traditional Music. *Music Interchange*. Concert at the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music, Auditorium, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, 7th January 2012.

2013

- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev and Huỳnh Khải and the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music Orchestra of Vietnamese Traditional Music. *Music Together*, Concert at the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music, Auditorium, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam 4th January 2013.
- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Highland Dreaming*, Recital at the Museum of Fine Arts, Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam, 4th – 5th January 2013.
- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Biểu diễn nghệ thuật cuối tuần*, Performance at the Municipal Theatre, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, 5th January 2013.

2014

- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Call of the Mountain Forest*, Recital at the Convention and Exhibition Centre, Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam, 3rd – 4th January 2014.
- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Concert for a Gentleman – celebrating Larry Sitsky's 80th Birthday*, Recital at Glebe Town Hall, Sydney, 20th July 2014.
- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Sydney Encore*, Recital at the University of New South Wales, Macauley Lecture Theatre, Sydney, 26th July 2014.

2015

- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Art of Sound Concert*, Recital at the University of Western Sydney, The Playhouse, Sydney, 28th May 2015.
- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*, Recital at Bridgewater State University, Horace Mann Auditorium, Bridgewater USA, 23th September 2015.
- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Guihangtar in concert*, Recital at University of Massachusetts, Recital Hall, Dartmouth Massachusetts USA, 24th September 2015.

2016

- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music*, Performance at the University of Adelaide, Elder Hall, Adelaide, 16th October 2016.

2017

- Le-Tuyen Nguyen. *Crossing Beyond*, Performance at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, Hong Kong, 16th October 2017.

2018

- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. Lecture-Recital at Hoa Sen University, Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam, 5th January 2018.
- Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev and Huỳnh Khải. *Infinite Echoes*, Concert at the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music, Auditorium B, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, 12th January 2018.

Posters and concert programs

2011

Figure 153: Massachusetts concert and lecture poster



CONCERT & PUBLIC LECTURE:

Nguyễn Lê-Tuyên

GuiHANGtar with Salil Sachdev

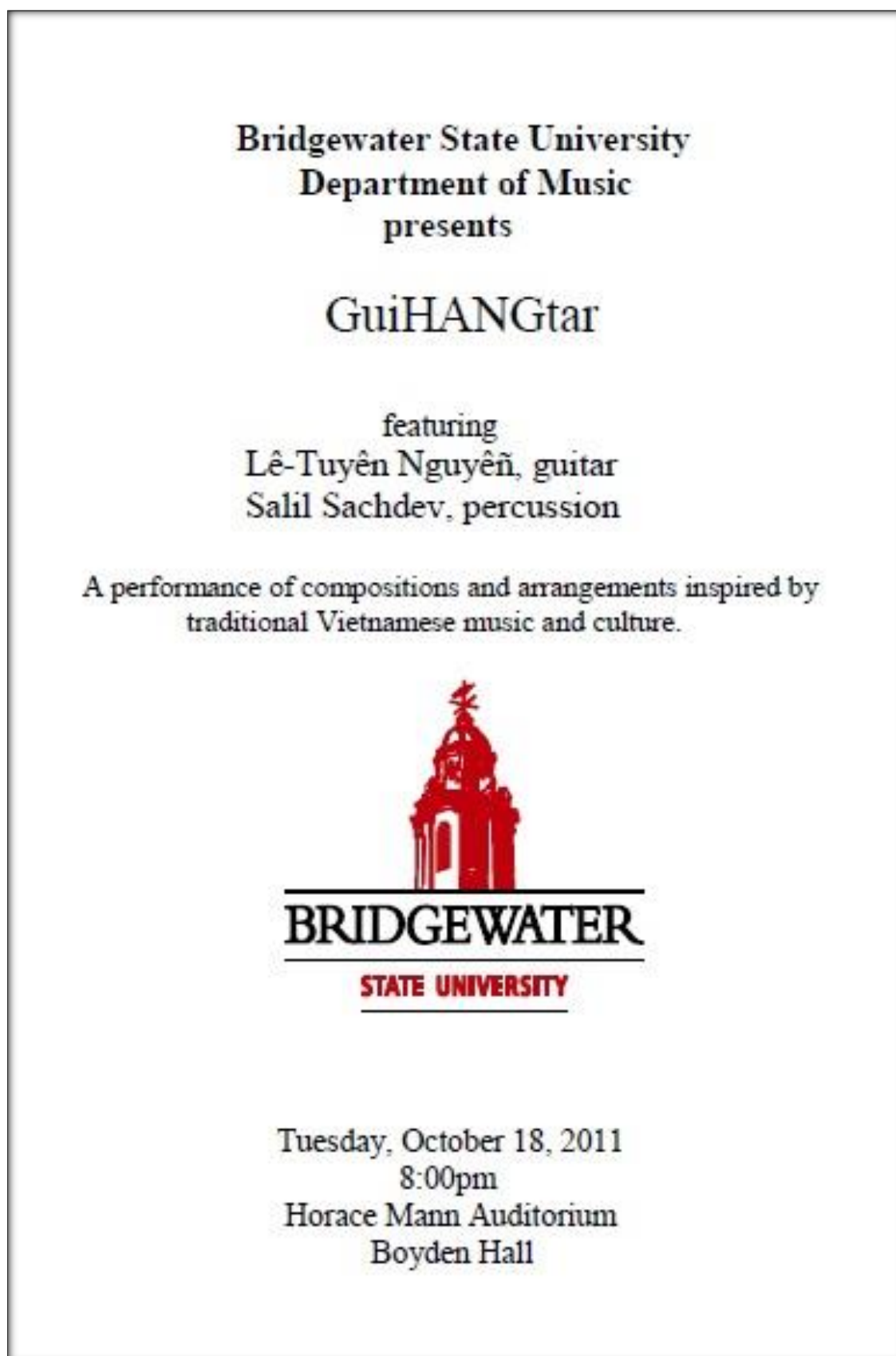
Massachusetts Tour 2011
GuiHANGtar in Concert
Thursday 13 October, 12:30PM
Recital Hall, College of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth USA

Tuesday 18 October, 8PM
Horace Mann Auditorium, Bridgewater State University USA

Lecture Demonstration
A NEW VOICE: Australian guitar music with Vietnamese cultural influences
Date: Monday 17 October 2011
Venue: Horace Mann Auditorium
Time: 1:50 - 3:05pm
Bridgewater State University USA

More information www.guihangtar.info

Figure 154: Concert program, Bridgewater State University, 18th October 2011



Program

Call of the Mountain and the Forest

The mystical landscape and the supernatural world of Vietnamese highlands

Highland Dreaming

Melody and dance rhythms of the Vietnamese highlanders

Nocturne

Creating tone color of the Vietnamese gongs in a study of natural harmonics and the new staccato-harmonic duotone technique

Moonlight

Come Together

The sounds and activities of the highland harvesters during a good rice crop

Love Song

Nonfunctional harmony for a Vietnamese traditional love song Ly Con Sao

Sunset

Exploration of sonorities on the Vietnamese folk song Ly Chieu Chieu

Fantasia

An arrangement of the folksong Trong Com from North Vietnam for the guitar

Chanson du Sud (Homage to Debussy)

Use of the whole-tone scale for the folk song Ly Chim Quyen from South Vietnam

Gods of the Highlands

Ambience of overtone clusters depicting ritual rhythms of a highland festival

White Bird

Vietnamese folk song Co La

Compositions and arrangements by Lê-Tuyên Nguyễn

Figure 155: Concert program, University of Massachusetts, 13th October 2011

 **UMass** | Dartmouth

Department of Music
Afternoon Concert Series
October 13, 2011

Presents

GuiHANGtar

Lê-Tuyên Nguyễn, guitar, with Salil Sachdev, percussion

program

Call of the Mountain and the Forest
The mystical landscape and the supernatural world of Vietnamese highlands

Highland Dreaming
Melody and dance rhythms of the Vietnamese highlanders

Nocturne
Creating tone color of the Vietnamese gongs in a study of natural harmonics and the new staccato-harmonic duotone technique

Moonlight

Come Together
The sounds and activities of the highland harvesters during a good rice crop

Love Song
Nonfunctional harmony for a Vietnamese traditional love song Ly Con Sao

Sunset
Exploration of sonorities on the Vietnamese folk song Ly Chieu Chieu

Chanson du Sud (Homage to Debussy)
Use of the whole-tone scale for the folk song Ly Chim Quyen from South Vietnam

Gods of the Highlands
Ambience of overtone clusters depicting ritual rhythms of a highland festival

White Bird
Vietnamese folk song Co La

Compositions by Lê-Tuyên Nguyễn

2012

Figure 156: *Music Interchange, Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music, 7th January 2012*



**BỘ VĂN HÓA, THỂ THAO VÀ DU LỊCH
NHẠC VIỆN TP. HỒ CHÍ MINH**

TỔNG LÃNH SỰ QUÁN AUSTRALIA





Khoa Âm Nhạc Dân Tộc

Nguyễn Lê Tuyên, Australian National University

GIAO LƯU ÂM NHẠC DÂN TỘC/ AUSTRALIAN - VIETNAMESE EVENT

GIAO ĐIỂM DÂN CA VIỆT - ÚC

MUSIC INTERCHANGE

15g00 Thứ Năm 12 Tháng 1 Năm 2012 / NHẠC VIỆN TP. HỒ CHÍ MINH

3.00PM Thursday 12 January 2012 / HCMC CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

MUSIC INTERCHANGE

The collaboration with the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music in 2012 includes the following performers of the Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music:

Lecturers:

Huỳnh Khải, Hải Phượng

Undergraduate and post-graduate students:

Tuyết Lê, Nguyễn Huy Vương, Trần Thiên Lâm, Lê Đại Dương, Phạm Văn Tấn, Huỳnh Kim Sinh, Trần Trí Trung, Lê Nhật Lệ Uyên, Nguyễn Hồng Mỹ Linh, Trần Như Ngọc, Ninh Triệu Giang Tiên, Trần Bảo Ngọc, Đinh Thị Thương Huyền, Nguyễn Thị Thúy Huỳnh, Nguyễn Vy Thảo Uyên, Nguyễn Doãn Vĩnh Hào, Dương Thị Ngọc Trâm, Nguyễn Khánh An, Nguyễn Thị Thanh Sương, Nguyễn Thị Thanh My, Đặng Thị Thúy Vy, Dương Văn Lạc, Lăng Thị Kim Ngân, Dương Bảo Khánh, Lâm Thị Thanh, Nguyễn Hoàng Linh, Phan Thị Huyền Trang.

Arrangements for guitar and Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music:

- i. **Song of the South** performed by Nguyễn Lê Tuyên, Huỳnh Khải and the HCMCCM Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music.
- ii. **White Bird** performed by Nguyễn Lê Tuyên and HCMCCM Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music.
- iii. **Song of the Nightingale** performed by Nguyễn Lê Tuyên and zither trio ensemble.

2013

Figure 157: *Music Together*, Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music, 4th January

2013

 **NHẠC VIỆN TP. HỒ CHÍ MINH**
HCMC CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

 **TỔNG LÃNH SỰ QUÁN ÚC TẠI TP. HỒ CHÍ MINH**
AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL HOCHIMINH CITY

KỶ NIỆM 40 NĂM THIẾT LẬP QUAN HỆ NGOẠI GIAO VIỆT – ÚC
CELEBRATION OF THE 40th ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND AUSTRALIA

MUSIC TOGETHER



15g00, ngày 04 tháng 01 năm 2013, tại Phòng Hòa Nhạc, Nhạc Viện TP. Hồ Chí Minh, 112 Nguyễn Du, Quận 1.
15:00 , 04 January 2013. Concert hall, Conservatory of Music, 112 Nguyễn Du, Dist.1, HCMC

Satit Sachdev
Nguyễn Lê Tuyết

MUSIC TOGETHER

In this collaboration with the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music in 2013, the performers of the Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music are:

Lecturers

Huỳnh Khải, Hải Phượng, Bùi Thiên Hoàng Quân, Lê Nhật Lệ Uyên

Undergraduate and post-graduate students

Lê Đại Dương, Nguyễn Vi Thảo Uyên, Nguyễn Thanh My, Ninh Triệu Giang Tiên, Đinh Thị Thương Huyền, Nguyễn Khánh An, Lâm Thị Thanh, Trần Thiên Lâm, Phạm Văn Tấn, Trần Trí Trung; Ca sĩ. Vũ Hoàng Như Đoan, Lê Như Ngọc Mai, Phạm Thị Song Thư.

PROGRAM

- i. **Waltzing Matilda** Australian folksong
Performed by Nguyễn Lê-Tuyên and the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music (HCMCCM)'s Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music
- ii. **Lý Kéo Chài** Southern Vietnamese folksong
Performed by the HCMCCM Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music
- iii. **Lý Con Sáo** Southern Vietnamese folksong
Performed by Huỳnh Khải, Hải Phượng, Hoàng Quân, Lê Uyên
- iv. **Lý Con Sáo** Southern Vietnamese folksong
Performed by Nguyễn Lê Tuyên, Huỳnh Khải and the HCMCCM Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music
- v. **Nhịp Cầu Quê Hương** Southern Vietnamese folksong

Performed by Lê Nhật Lê Uyên and the HCMCCM Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music

vi. Come Together

Performed by Nguyễn Lê Tuyên và Salil Sachdev

vii. Cò Lã Northern Vietnamese folksong

Composer: Le-Tuyen Nguyen

Performed by Nguyễn Lê Tuyên and HCMCCM Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music

viii. Farewell to the Mountain Forest

Composer: Le-Tuyen Nguyen

Performed by Nguyễn Lê-Tuyên

ix. Dạ Khúc (Lưu Thủy Hành Vân)

Composer: Bá Quế

Performed by Đại Dương and HCMCCM Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music

x. Trống Cơm Northern Vietnamese folksong

Performed by Nguyễn Lê Tuyên, Salil Sachdev and HCMCCM Orchestra of Vietnamese traditional music

2014

Figure 158: *Concert for a Gentleman – celebrating Larry Sitsky's 80th Birthday,*
Glebe Town Hall, Sydney, 20th July 2014



GUIHANGTAR
LE-TUYEN NGUYEN + SALIL SACHDEV

CONCERT FOR A GENTLEMAN
celebrating
Larry Sitsky's 80th Birthday

Venue: Glebe Town Hall
Date: Sunday 20 July 2014
Time: 2.00pm - 3.00pm
Admission: Free
Info: www.guihangtar.net

 Australian National University

This event is supported by
ANU School of Music
music.anu.edu.au

2015

Figure 159: *Guihangtar in concert*, University of Massachusetts, 24th September 2015

**UMass** | Dartmouth

Department of Music
Afternoon Concert Series
September 24, 2015 12:30 pm
CVPA Recital Hall

Presents

GUIHANGTAR

Le-Tuyen Nguyen, guitar
Salil Sachdev, percussion

Prelude
Improvisation on the Indian drone

Gods of the Highlands
Ambience of highland festivals

Call of the Mountain Forest
The mystical landscape and the supernatural world of the mountain forest

Sunset
Ambience of the Mekong delta sunset

Dawn of the Mountain Forest
Creation of Earth

Song of the South
Vietnamese folk song

Highland Dreaming
Melody and dance rhythms of highlanders

Come Together
The sounds and activities of the harvesters during a good rice crop

* For everyone's enjoyment, please silence phones and other devices and do not use them during the concert. Once seated, please remain for the entire program. Unauthorized recording and/or photography is not permitted.

Figure 160: Art of Sound,

The University of Western Sydney, 28th May 2015

GUIHANGTAR: Art of Sound Concert



Guihangtar comprises guitarist Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australia) and percussionist Salil Sachdev (USA). The duo initially emerged as a potential collaboration incorporating the guitar and the Hang (a percussion instrument invented in Switzerland in 2000). However, Guihangtar's maiden concert in 2010 evolved to include other percussion instruments as well.

Guihangtar performs compositions and arrangements largely inspired by, but not limited to, nature and traditional music. The essence of the group is such that it is an evolving musical dialogue not bound by any specific cultural confines. Traditional melodic and rhythmic idioms weave with Western music exploring the technical and expressive dimensions of the guitar, enhanced with percussion instruments from various parts of the world.

Guihangtar exemplifies a continually emerging and exciting interaction between two musicians with varied cultural and musical backgrounds residing on opposite sides of the world. It is an expression of tradition, innovation, and global interaction.

Le-Tuyen Nguyen is a Teaching Fellow at the Australian National University. Salil Sachdev is Chair of the Music Department at Bridgewater State University, Massachusetts, USA.

PROGRAM

Prelude

Improvisation on the Indian drone

Gods of the Highlands

Ambience of overtone clusters depicting ritual rhythms of highland festivals

Highland Dreaming

Melody and dance rhythms of highlanders

Dawn of the Mountain Forest

Creation of Earth

Moonlight

Confluence of guitar harmonics and Tibetan gong

Nucleus

Hang (hand steel drum) solo

Call of the Mountain Forest

The mystical landscape and the supernatural world of the mountain forest

Come Together

The sounds and activities of the harvesters during a good rice crop

Compositions by Le-Tuyen Nguyen.

Nucleus composed by Salil Sachdev

PLAYHOUSE THEATRE
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY
Kingswood NSW 2747 Australia

Thursday 28 May 2015
1.00 pm - 2.00 pm

More information: www.guihangtar.net

Figure 161: *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*,
Bridgewater State University, 23th September 2015



LE-TUYEN NGUYEN guitar + SALIL SACHDEV percussion

DAWN OF THE MOUNTAIN FOREST

Euphoria *The joyful sound of bells*

Prelude *Improvisation on the Indian drone*

Gods of the Highlands *Ambience of highland festivals*

Call of the Mountain Forest *The mystical landscape and the supernatural world of the mountain forest*

Sunset *Ambience of the Mekong delta sunset*

Dawn of the Mountain Forest *Creation of Earth*

Song of the South *Vietnamese folk song*

Highland Dreaming *Melody and dance rhythms of highlanders*

Nucleus *Percussion Solo*

Farewell to the Mountain Forest *Guitar solo*

Heart of the Ocean *Inspiration from the Australian Great Barrier Reef seascapes and the musical cultures of the Pacific*

Come Together *The sounds and activities of the harvesters during a good rice crop*

HORACE MANN AUDITORIUM
BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY
WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 8.00 PM

An evolving musical dialogue not bound by any specific cultural confines. A continually emerging and exciting interaction between two musicians with varied cultural and musical backgrounds residing on opposite sides of the world. Guihangtar is an expression of tradition, innovation, and global interaction.



www.guihangtar.net

2016

Figure 162: *Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music,*
The University of Adelaide, 16th October 2016.

GUIHANGTAR IN CONCERT

Festival of Vietnamese Traditional Music in Australia



GUIHANGTAR

Guihangtar comprises guitarist Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australia) and percussionist Sachdev (USA). Guihangtar performs original compositions and arrangements largely inspired by, but not limited to, nature and traditional music. The essence of the duo is such that it is an evolving musical dialogue not bound by any specific cultural confines.

Traditional melodic and rhythmic idioms weave with Western music exploring the technical and expressive dimensions of the guitar, enhanced with percussion instruments from various parts of the world.

Guihangtar exemplifies a continually emerging and exciting interaction between two musicians with varied cultural and musical backgrounds residing on opposite sides of the world. It is an expression of tradition, innovation, and global interaction.

"Very evocative"

*Diana Blom, Associate Professor of Music
Western Sydney University*



Date Sunday 16th October 2016

Time 7.00 pm

Venue Elder Hall University of Adelaide
North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

Tickets: <http://music.adelaide.edu.au/concerts/tickets/>

Website: www.guihangtar.net

2018

Figure 163: Hoa Sen University, 5th January 2018



HOA SEN UNIVERSITY
www.hoasen.edu.vn

GUIHANGTAR DUO with
LE-TUYEN NGUYEN guitar
SALIL SACHDEV percussion

18:30 - 19:30
05/01/2018

R.903,
Hoa Sen University
8 Nguyen Van Trang,
District1, HCMC.

HOA SEN UNIVERSITY
presents

APPENDIX IV:

ACADEMIC

PRESENTATIONS

Conference Lecture – Recitals

1. Le-Tuyen Nguyen & Salil Sachdev. *Vietnamese Gong culture in contemporary compositions*, Lecture-demonstration presented at *Power of Music*, National Conference of Musicological Society of Australia, The University of Western Australia, December 2011. <http://www.music.uwa.edu.au/research/power-of-music/icme/?a=1891193>
2. Le-Tuyen Nguyen. *Australian guitar music with Vietnamese cultural influences*. Lecture-demonstration presented at *Voyages of Discovery*, National Conference of the New Zealand Musicological Society, the University of Auckland, New Zealand, 30 November – 2 December 2012.
3. Le-Tuyen Nguyen. *Ambience from the Vietnamese Highlands*. Lecture-recitals presented at the *Music and Environment Symposium*, The University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, 13th April 2013.
4. Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Salil Sachdev. *GuiHANGtar: Rooted in Tradition, Molded in Innovation*. Lecture-demonstration presented at the *World Forum on Music*, Queensland Conservatorium, Brisbane, 20th November 2013

Conference Papers

1. Le-Tuyen Nguyen. *Nhạc tài tử: Lost in Translation*. Paper at the 2013 World Conference of the International Council of Traditional Music, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Shanghai, July 2013.
2. Le-Tuyen Nguyen. *Nhạc tài tử: A French Affair*. Paper presented at the joint Musicological Society of Australia & New Zealand Musicological Society International Conference *Music and Metamorphosis*, Griffith University Brisbane, 18 – 22 November 2013.

3. Le-Tuyen Nguyen. *Australian guitar music with Vietnamese cultural influences*. Paper presented at the 43rd World Conference of the International Council of Traditional Music, the University of Kazakhstan, Astana, July 2015.
4. Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Huynh Khai. *The first Western music score of Nhạc Tài tử: historical contexts and musical analysis*. Paper presented at the 38th National Conference of the Musicological Society of Australia Conference *Musical Dialogues*, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Sydney, 1 – 4 October 2015.
5. Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Huynh Khai. *The first Western score of Tài tử music: historical contexts, interpretation, and hypothesis*. Paper presented at 2017 World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music, the University of Limerick Ireland, 13 – 20 July 2017.

Abstracts

Ambience from the Vietnamese central highlands: Nature, Gong Music, and the Gods

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australian National University). Presentation at the *Music and Environment Symposium*, the University of Technology Sydney 26 April 2013

Abstract: With beautiful landscapes and primitive forests, the Vietnamese central highlands are the home of most endangered species and several Vietnamese ethnic communities. The highlanders believe that Gong music is a divined language to communicate with the gods and the supernatural world. In 2005, UNESCO recognised Vietnamese Gong culture as a Masterpiece of Intangible Heritage of Humanity. This lecture-recital presents a new repertoire of Australian music with influences from the Vietnamese highlands written for solo guitar. These works are based on the author's own research and existing ethno-musicological research into Gong music. Each

composition explores new possibilities to capture the unique tone colours and ambience of Vietnamese Gong music in its environment. The lecture will demonstrate how Vietnamese highlands' nature, musical materials and social contexts are used as a source of inspiration in the compositional process. The performance includes compositions inspired by the mystical landscapes, tone colour of the gongs, the sacred ceremonies of highlander, and a recent composition dedicated to the last Javan rhinoceros killed in Nam Cat Tien National Park.

Program

1. *Call of the Mountain Forest*: Inspirations from the mystical landscape and the supernatural world of the Vietnamese highlands
2. *Highland Dreaming*: Melody and dance rhythms from Vietnamese Gong music
3. *Come Together*: A musical narrative of a harvest day in the highlands: To-drang ritual rhythm and pentatonic melodies
4. *Farewell to the Mountain Forest*: Homage to the last Javan rhinoceros in the Vietnam. Atonal, Heavy-metal and materials from Vietnamese Gong music
5. *Gods of the Highlands*: Ambience of overtone clusters and the To-nol rhythmic ostinato as a prayer to the God

Australian guitar music with Vietnamese cultural influences

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australian National University). Paper at the *Voyages of Discovery* Conference, New Zealand Musicological Society, the University of Auckland New Zealand, 30 November – 2 December 2012.

Abstract: In 1967, the prominent Australian musicologist Roger Covell noted that Australians would flourish together in “the most fecund musical culture that has ever existed on earth” with musical interchanges between Australia and its Asia-Pacific

neighbours. For more than 40 years, Australian composers have continued to look for new musical ideas and inspiration in the music of other cultures demonstrating significant interests in the music of China, Bali, Java and Japan and the Pacific. Vietnamese music has also been used in Australian compositions. Notable examples are Anne Boyd's String Quartet *Tu Dai Oan* (1968) and *My Name is Tian* for voice and instrumental ensemble (1979), and recently Diana Blom's *The Ca Trù Singer* for Piano and Bassoon (2010). This lecture-recital presents a new repertoire of Australian music with Vietnamese cultural influences written for solo guitar. These works are based on the author's own research and existing ethnomusicological research into Vietnamese traditional music. Each composition reflects an exploration of the musical and technical possibilities of the guitar as the expressive medium, weaving together Vietnamese material and Western Art music styles. The lecture also demonstrates how Vietnamese traditional music and social contexts are used as a source of inspiration in the compositional process. The performance includes compositions inspired by the instrumental music of the Vietnamese *Gong culture* and the vocal music of the *Quan Họ Bắc Ninh* and the *Lý* folk songs.

Vietnamese Gong culture in contemporary compositions

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (The Australian National University) and Salil Sachdev (Bridgewater State University). Presentation at the *Power of Music* – Joint Musicological Society of Australia & New Zealand Musicological Society International Conference, the University of Western Australia Perth Australia, November 2011.

Abstract: Vietnamese Gong culture was recognised by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005. Music is considered to have a sacred power and is used in various rituals of Vietnamese community life. Gong ensemble music is a

divined language for the highlanders to communicate with the gods and the supernatural world.

Guihangtar is a duo performing contemporary compositions inspired by Vietnamese Gong culture. The duo comprises guitarist Le-Tuyen Nguyen and percussionist Salil Sachdev. Traditional melodic and rhythmic idioms of the highlands are brought to life with a new voice through compositions for the guitar. To this are added an array of percussive sounds through instruments from various parts of the world. The lecture-recital will demonstrate how Vietnamese musical materials and social contexts are used as a source of inspiration in the compositional process. The discourse will include melodic and rhythmic features, tone colour of the gongs, the sounds and activities of the harvesters, and the ritual rhythms of a highland festival.

Guihangtar: Rooted in Tradition, Molded in Innovation

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australian National University) and Salil Sachdev (Bridgewater State University). *World Forum on Music*, Queensland Conservatorium, November 2013.

Abstract: Guihangtar is truly reflective of the metamorphosis reflecting a movement in the society and music of our time. Guihangtar performs compositions and arrangements inspired by traditional Vietnamese music and culture. Traditional folk songs and melodic and rhythmic idioms from various regions of Vietnam are brought to life with a new voice through the use of an acoustic guitar and an array of percussive sounds from various parts of the world rather than traditional Vietnamese instruments. Hence, while the music itself depicts the mystical landscape of the Vietnamese highlands, tone color of Vietnamese gongs, traditional folk songs, the sounds and activities of the highland harvesters, and the ritual rhythms of a highland festival, the vehicle used to depict the

tradition is the guitar (a twentieth century Western music instrument) and percussion instruments originating from various parts of the world.

The first Western score of Tài tử music: historical contexts, interpretation, and hypothesis

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australian National University) and Huynh Khai (Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music). Paper at the *2017 World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music*, the University of Limerick Ireland, 13 – 20 July 2017

Abstract: Tài tử music emerged in Southern Vietnam during the nineteenth century. The first Tài tử music performance in the West was part of the theatrical production *La Bague Enchantée* (The Magic Ring) at the 1900 Paris World Exposition where the famous French ballerina Cléo de Mérode and her dancers performed a Cambodian dance accompanied by Vietnamese musicians. This event attracted so much attention from the French media, the musicologist Julien Tiersot wrote in his review: “Is it necessary to recall once again the Cambodian dance which, was accompanied by the musicians from very truly Cochinchina?” Tiersot met the leader of the Vietnamese musicians who helped Tiersot notate “the fundamental repertoire of (Tài tử) music performed at the Exposition” which was later published as *Danse de l’Indo-chine* (Dance of Indochina). To date, this 116 year old notation is the first published Western music score of Tài tử music.

This paper will discuss the historical contexts which led to the collaboration between European dancers and Vietnamese musicians. A comparative study will highlight the similarities between the musical materials found in Tiersot’s notation and the Tài tử classic Ancient Repertoire which is still currently performed in Vietnam. Based on the study, this paper will identify the Tài tử modes, ornamentations and expressive techniques which were not included in the score. The discussion will be accompanied

by live demonstrations on traditional Vietnamese music instruments. Based on new findings, this paper will also explore the hypothesis that *Danse de l'Indo-chine* reflects the performance order of Tài tử musical items in the theatrical production *La Bague Enchantée*. This ordering of musical materials may well have been chosen to support the dramatic storyline of the production.

Australian guitar music with Vietnamese cultural influences

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australian National University). Paper at the *2015 World Conference of the International Council of Traditional Music*, Kazakh National University of Arts, Astana Kazakhstan, 16 -22 July 2015.

Abstract: Since the early twentieth century, Australian composers have looked for musical ideas and inspiration in the music of its Asia-Pacific neighbours, demonstrating significant interests in the music of China, Bali, Java and Japan. Vietnamese music has been used in only a few Australian compositions, notable examples are Anne Boyd's String Quartet *Tu Dai Oan* (1968) and *My Name is Tian* for voice and instrumental ensemble (1979), and recently Diana Blom's *The Ca Trù Singer* for Piano and Bassoon (2010). This paper investigates a new repertoire of Australian music for solo guitar with Vietnamese cultural influences which incorporated musical materials covering the three main regions of Vietnam: the vocal music of the Quan Họ Bắc Ninh from the Northern region; and the instrumental music of the Gong culture from the central highlands; and the Lý folk songs of the Mekong delta. These works are based on the composer's own research and existing ethno-musicological research weaving together Vietnamese traditional music and Western art music styles.

This paper will identify the musical materials and social contexts of Vietnamese music and analyse how these materials are combined with Western materials as a source of inspiration in the compositions. Discussion will also address (1) the composer's use of

scordatura which allows the creation of a new compositional medium to capture the unique tone colours and ambience of Vietnamese traditional music; and (2) new methods of notation to facilitate the performance of the original compositions. With a unique confluence of Vietnamese and Western musical features, this guitar repertoire reflects a new voice in contemporary Australian music from an emerging generation of Australian-Vietnamese composers. These works preserve and promote some aspects of Vietnamese traditional music while contributing to the intercultural musical exchanges between Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

The first Western music score of Nhạc Tài tử: historical contexts and musical analysis

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australian National University) and Huynh Khai (HCMC Conservatory of Music). Paper at *Musical Dialogues*, the 38th National Conference of the Musicological Society of Australia, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 1 – 4 October 2015.

Abstract: Nhạc Tài tử is a genre of traditional music that emerged in Southern Vietnam during the nineteenth century. The first Tài tử performance in the West was part of the theatrical production *La Bague Enchantée* (The Magic Ring) at the 1900 Paris World Exposition, where Vietnamese musicians accompanied European dancers who were led by the famous French ballerina Cléo de Mérode. The musicologist Julien Tiersot attended this performance and met the leader of the Vietnamese musicians who helped Tiersot notate “the fundamental repertoire of (Tài tử) music performed at the Exposition” which was later published as *Danse de l’Indo-chine* (Dance of Indochina). To date, this 110 year old notation is the first published Western music score of Nhạc Tài tử.

This paper will discuss the historical contexts which led to the collaboration between European dancers and Vietnamese musicians. Analysis of the score will reveal traces of Tài tử music that are still currently performed in Vietnam. A discussion, accompanied by live demonstrations on traditional Vietnamese music instruments, will illustrate theoretical principles of the Tài tử modes, ornamentations and expressive techniques which were not included in the score. A comparative study will highlight similarities between the musical materials found in Tiersot's notation and the Tài tử classic Ancient Repertoire. Based on new findings, this paper will also explore the hypothesis that *Danse de l'Indo-chine* reflects the performance order of Tài tử musical items in the theatrical production *La Bague Enchantée*. This ordering of musical materials may well have been chosen to support the dramatic storyline of the production.

Nhạc tài tử: A French Affair

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australian National University). Paper at *Music and Metamorphosis*, Joint Musicological Society of Australia & New Zealand Musicological Society International Conference, Griffith University, Brisbane, November 2013.

Abstract: Emerging in the late nineteenth century and widely performed in the formal rituals and social gatherings, *Nhạc tài tử* still has a strong connection with people's lives in Southern Vietnam today. The author's earlier research demonstrated that *Nhạc Tài tử* was chosen to represent the musical culture of Indochina at the *Paris World Exposition* in 1900. The instrumental and vocal performance of *tài tử* music together with the dance of the French ballerina *Cléo de Mérode* at the *Théâtre Indo-Chinois* was a huge success and received much attention from French media. This paper discusses French writings on *tài tử* music; including Julien Tiersot's 113 year old music score *Danse de l'Indo-chine*, recently discovered by the author, in which Tiersot notated

parts of *tài tử* music performed at this Exposition. Six years later, *Nhạc tài tử* was again chosen to be performed at the 1906 *Colonial Exposition* in Marseille. This paper will illustrate that the experience and inspirations drawn from the performances in France had an impact on the transformation of *Nhạc tài tử* from private performances to concert venues, starting in Mỹ Tho and later in Saigon. This paper hypothesizes that the emergence of *Ca ra bộ* (Sing with gestures), which later became *Cải Lương* (Reformed Theatre), had its roots and drew its inspiration from the integration of *tài tử* music and *Cléo de Mérode's* dance. Like the success at the 1900 Exposition, *Cải Lương* became one of the most popular genres of performing arts in Vietnam in the twentieth century.

Nhạc tài tử: Lost in Translation

Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Australian National University). Paper at the 2013 *World Conference* of the International Council of Traditional Music, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, July 2013.

Abstract: Nhạc tài tử emerged in the late nineteenth century and still has a strong connection with people's lives in Southern Vietnam today. In 2011, Vietnam submitted this genre to be considered as a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Recent research shows that musicians of Nhạc tài tử – known as the group from French Indochina, gave a performance at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. Musicologists have referred to this genre in French as *Musique des Amateurs* and English as *Music of Amateurs*, based on the social characteristics that it has been widely performed by non-professional musicians in informal gatherings. This paper raises the issues in translating Nhạc tài tử regarding the semantic, musical and social contexts.

According to the first Vietnamese dictionary (1895), *tài tử* originally means ‘cultivated/talented man’ and ‘traditional music specialist’. The expression as ‘amateur’ has only been used since the 1940s. Students of *Nhạc tài tử* are trained privately by skilled masters for many years. Since 1956, formal training has been available at the *École Nationale de Musique* (National School of Music). In the musical contexts; even though having an improvisational nature, *Nhạc tài tử* is based on highly structured compositions with detailed ensemble practice, which originated from the ritual music of *Nhã nhạc* (a genre of Vietnamese court music). Music scores have been published since 1911 and commercial recordings available since the 1930s. ‘Music of Amateurs’ does not reflect the changes in semantic, musical and social contexts; and somewhat implies that *Nhạc tài tử* is inferior to other Vietnamese traditional music. Musicologists did not perceive a need or appropriate equivalence to translate the Javanese *Gamelan*, the Indian *Khayal*, the Japanese *Noh*, the Vietnamese *Quan họ*, etc; it is time to return *Nhạc tài tử* to its Vietnamese name.

APPENDIX V:

PUBLIC LECTURES

Paris in 1900: Music and Dance from Indochina

Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Hiep Duc Nguyen. University Preparation College, Sydney, 24th November 2013

Abstract: Paris 1900 welcomed the dawn of the new century when people from all over the world came to the Paris World Exposition to showcase their cultural heritages, achievements and aspirations. Universally presented in the *Art Nouveau* style, the Exposition saw the introduction of many inventions including diesel engines, talking films, sound recording and many more. A unique showcase from Indochina attracted much attention from French journalists and arts writers: the combination of *Tài tử* music and Cambodian dance, which was performed by a group of Vietnamese traditional musicians with the renowned French ballerina Cléo de Mérode and other Italian dancers. A part of the music at the performance was notated as *Danse de l'Indo-chine* (Indochina Dance) by Julien Tiersot, a prominent French musicologist. To date, his 113 year old manuscript is the first known Western notation of *Tài tử* music.

Eastern Music, Western Notes

David Irving and Le-Tuyen Nguyen. Public lecture at the National Library of Australia, 7th May 2014. Presented by the Asia-Pacific Special Interest Group, ALIA.

Abstract: Lost – or found – in translation? This presentation, accompanied by musical excerpts, will highlight fascinating examples of music as intercultural exchange between Southeast Asia and the West. Dr. David Irving is a specialist on Baroque music and its use in the Malay world, and Le-Tuyen Nguyen is an authority on a popular form of nineteenth century Vietnamese music.

Eastern Influences in Australian Art Music

Le-Tuyen Nguyen. Bridgewater State University, 25th September 2015.

Abstract: From the birth of the nation as a British colony in 1788, Australian music has been strongly influenced by British and European cultural traditions. In the twentieth century, a musical trend reflecting Eastern cultural influences emerged in Australian art music. This lecture will examine the significant Australian interest in the music of Indonesia, China and Japan since the 1960s. The discussion will also explore the influences of music from other Asian countries with a specific focus on the music of Vietnam. With reference to historical and social contexts, this lecture will illustrate Asian musical ideas that inspired leading Australian composers from the twentieth century to the present day.

Saigon: Echoes from 1900

The Old Compass, Ho Chi Minh City, 4th January 2018.

Presenters: Le-Tuyen Nguyen, Australian National University; Huynh Khai, Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music; Mai Phương and Mỹ Tiên, vocalists

Abstract: A lecture-demonstration on the first recording of Southern Vietnamese music, featuring a love song performed by a female vocalist from Saigon, recently discovered in a French archive of the 1900 Paris World Exposition. The highlight of the night will be a world-premiere live performance of this newly-found song. The sounds from more than a century earlier will be brought to life again by leading Saigonese traditional musicians.

Figure 164: Paris in 1900: Music and Dance from Indochina,
University Preparation College, Sydney 24th November 2013

VIETNAM FOUNDATION proudly presents the lecture-demonstration

PARIS IN 1900: MUSIC AND DANCE FROM INDOCHINA



Photo: Cécile de Mérode and Vietnamese traditional musicians at the 1900 Paris World Exposition

Paris 1900 welcomed the dawn of the new century with people from all over the world coming to the Paris World Exposition to showcase their cultural heritages, achievements and aspirations. Universally presented in the Art Nouveau style, the Exposition saw the introduction of many inventions including diesel engines, talking films, sound recording and many more.

A unique showcase from Indochina that attracted much attention from French journalists and arts writers was the combination of Vietnamese *Tai Nô* music and Cambodian dance, which was performed by a group of Vietnamese traditional musicians with the renowned French ballerina Cécile de Mérode and other Italian dancers. A part of the music at the performance was notated as *Dance de l'Indochine* (Indochine Dance) by Julien Tiersot, a prominent French musicologist. To date, his 113 years old manuscript is the first known Western notation of *Tai Nô* music.

The lecture-demonstration includes:

- A lecture or Overview of the 1900 Paris World Exposition, with a focus on the historical, social and musical contexts of the performance by Cécile de Mérode and Vietnamese musicians, presented by Le-Tuyen Nguyen (Teaching Fellow, the Australian National University School of Music) and Hiep Nguyen (Researcher, NSW Department of Environment and Heritage)
- A snippet of a contemporary interpretation of the *Indochine Dance* performed by Geraldine Balazsa (Dancer & Choreographer, Project Amaya) and professional Vietnamese traditional musicians in Sydney.
- An introduction to the recent publication by Le-Tuyen Nguyen and Hiep Nguyen *Hát Bội, Đờn Ca Tài tử & Cải Lương from Late Nineteenth-Century to Early Twentieth-Century*, which contains more information on the three Vietnamese music genres and the musical and cultural connections between France and Vietnam.

The book is available for purchase after the lecture-demonstration.

Date: Sunday 24 November 2013
Time: 2.00pm – 3.30pm
Venue: University Preparation College
 Level 1, 27 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown, NSW
 (above Pho Ah restaurant)

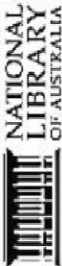
Admission: by invitation only
Refreshments: will be provided
Further information: le-tuyen.nguyen@anu.edu.au or
<http://www.vietnamfoundation.org.au> or
<http://www.unsw.edu.au>

This event will be filmed by Receiving Features Entertainment.
 A video of the event will be available at
<http://www.receivingfeatures.com.au/>

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Figure 165: *Eastern Music, Western Notes*,
National Library of Australia, Canberra, 7th May 2014

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When

7 May 2014, 12.15pm-1.15pm

Where

Conference Room, Level 4

Free

No bookings required

Plan your visit

Getting here

Opening hours

Facilities for visitors

Parking

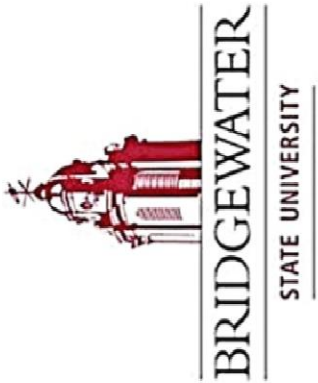
Lost – or found – in translation? This presentation, accompanied by musical excerpts, will highlight fascinating examples of music as intercultural exchange between Southeast Asia and the West. Dr. David Irving is a specialist on Baroque music and its use in the Malay world, and Le-Tuyen Nguyen is an authority on a popular form of nineteenth century Vietnamese music.

Presented by the Asia-Pacific Special Interest Group, ALIA

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Figure 166: *Eastern influences in Australian art music,*

Bridgewater State University, 25th September 2015



PUBLIC LECTURE

Eastern Influences in Australian Art Music

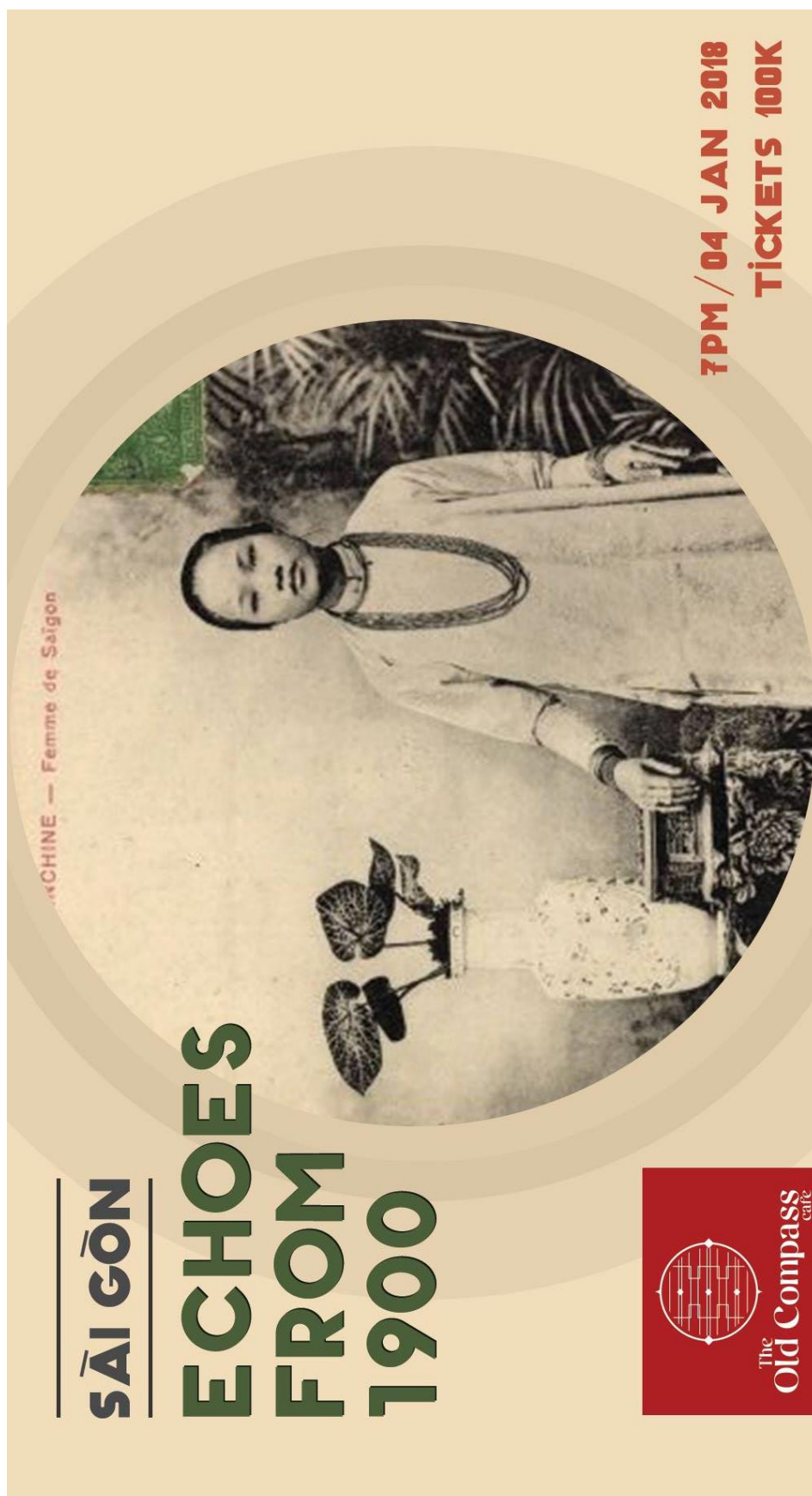
FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2015
1.00 - 2.15 pm
Horace Mann Auditorium
Bridgewater State University

From the birth of the nation as a British colony in 1788, Australian music had been strongly influenced by British and European cultural traditions. In the twentieth-century, a musical trend reflecting Eastern cultural influences emerged in Australian art music. This lecture will examine the significant Australian interest in the music of Indonesia, China and Japan since the 1960s. The discussion will also explore the influences of music from other Asian countries with a specific focus on the music of Vietnam. With reference to historical and social contexts, this lecture will illustrate Asian musical ideas that inspired leading Australian composers from the twentieth-century to the present day.

Le-Tuyen Nguyen

Le-Tuyen Nguyen is an Australian composer, researcher and Teaching Fellow at the Australian National University School of Music. His research interests include guitar music, Australian music with Asian influences and Vietnamese traditional music. Le-Tuyen is the inventor of the new guitar technique *staccato-harmonic duotone*. He is the co-founder of the *Guihangtar Duo* in collaboration with Professor Saili Sachdev of Bridgewater State University.

Figure 167: *Saigon: Echoes from 1900*, The Old Compass
Ho Chi Minh City, 4th January 2018.



APPENDIX VI: PUBLICATIONS

Academic Journals (in Vietnamese)

Nguyễn, Lê Tuyên. “Âm hưởng phương Đông trong âm nhạc cổ điển Úc” (Eastern influences in Australian art music). *Văn hóa học* 5 (20) (2015): 61 – 74.

Nguyễn, Lê Tuyên & Nguyễn, Đức Hiệp. “Quan hệ văn hoá Pháp-Việt đầu thế kỷ 20 qua sự kiện Triển lãm Toàn cầu 1900”. *Văn hóa học* 6 (16) (2014): 31-36.

Nguyễn, Đức Hiệp & Nguyễn, Lê Tuyên . “Hát bội, đờn ca tài tử và sự hình thành cải lương từ cuối thế kỷ 19 đến đầu thế kỷ 20.” *Tạp chí Nghiên cứu và Phát triển* 1 (99) (2013): 64-73.

Nguyễn Đức Hiệp & Nguyễn, Lê Tuyên. “Hát bội, đờn ca tài tử và sự hình thành cải lương từ cuối thế kỷ 19 đến đầu thế kỷ 20 (Tiếp theo).” *Tạp chí Nghiên cứu và Phát triển* 2 (100) (2013): 34-50.

Book chapter

Nguyen, Le-Tuyen. “Staccato-harmonic duotone”. *Six epigrams for guitar: illustrating Le-Tuyen Nguyen’s discovery of duotones on the guitar*. By Larry Sitsky. Sydney: Australian Music Centre. 2013.

Book (in Vietnamese)

Nguyễn, Lê Tuyên & Nguyễn, Đức Hiệp. *Hát bội, đờn ca tài tử và cải lương cuối thế kỷ 19 đầu thế kỷ 20*. Ho Chi Minh City: Văn Hóa Văn Nghệ & Phương Nam Book. 2013.

Recordings

Nguyen, Le-Tuyen & Sachdev, Salil. *Dawn of the Mountain Forest*. Guihangtar. 2014.

Nguyễn, Lê-Tuyên and Sachdev, Salil. *GuiHANGtar (October 18, 2011)*. BSU Department of Music Music Faculty Concerts and Recitals. Concert #5, 2011.

Newspapers (in Vietnamese)

Nguyễn, Lê Tuyên. “Sài Gòn và thời kỳ phôi thai của Cải lương.” *Tuổi Trẻ Cuối Tuần* 30, August 12, 2018, 34-35.

Nguyễn, Lê Tuyên. “Kỷ niệm một trăm năm cải lương: Góc nhìn từ Paris 1931.” *Người Đô Thị* 75, August 2018, 42-43.

Nguyễn, Lê Tuyên. “Sự kỳ diệu của Đờn ca Tài tử”. *Thể thao & Văn hóa*, May 1, 2014.

APPENDIX VII: STACCATO-HARMONIC DUOTONE

A recent Australian innovation, the staccato-harmonic duotone technique is a unique method of sound production on the guitar. With the use of standard guitar technique, it has been only possible to produce one sound of definite pitch on one string at a time. The use of extended techniques only changes the tone colour but does not generate another definite pitch. Staccato-harmonic duotone is an innovative technique that with a single stroke on one string can simultaneously produce two definite pitches. These two definite pitches are the fundamental and the natural harmonic at the same fret of a guitar string.

Method of production

To produce the fundamental sound in standard guitar technique, the left hand finger is placed to the *left* of a fret to press the string down against the fingerboard while the right hand is used to pluck the string. To produce a natural harmonic, the left hand finger is used to touch the string *directly over* a specific fret without pressing it down onto the fingerboard. As its name suggests, staccato-harmonic duotones technique involves both the productions of the fundamental and the natural harmonic at the frets where natural harmonics are produced. The left hand finger is also positioned *directly over a fret* but the string is pressed *down directly onto the fret* at exactly the same time as the right hand plucks the string. The left hand finger must be released immediately to let the string vibrate. As soon as the left hand finger is lifted, the fundamental pitch is silent because the force to hold it at the fret is no longer available while the harmonic pitch continues to vibrate.

In a duotone the fundamental generally has lower pitch than the harmonic, except on the twelfth fret, where both sounds are actually in unison. For example, if we perform the duotone technique on the fifth fret of the sixth string, we will hear both the fundamental

pitch A and the harmonic pitch E one octave and a fifth above. On the twelfth fret of the same string, we will hear one fundamental pitch E and another harmonic pitch E at the same time. However, the metallic, bell-like colour of the harmonic gives a clear contrast to the fundamental. Therefore, despite having two same pitches on the twelfth fret, the duotone on this position is aurally distinguished as two separate tone colours

Example 1: The fifth fret of the sixth string

Fundamental A
Harmonic E
Duotone on the 5th fret of the 6th string

Example 2: The twelfth fret of the sixth string

Fundamental E
Harmonic E
Fundamental and harmonic in unison

In addition to pitch and tone colour, each layer of a duotone also has a different note value. The fundamental has a staccato effect with shorter note value, whereas the harmonic layer has a longer duration continuing until the string stops vibrating. These distinctive features in pitch, note value and articulation are audible simultaneously in the two layers of a duotone on one guitar string. A summary of the characteristics of the two layers of the staccato-harmonic duotone is given below.

Staccato-harmonic duotone	
Staccato layer	Harmonic layer
• Normal guitar tone colour • Lower definite pitch • Same pitch on the twelfth fret • Shorter value • <i>Staccato</i> effect	• Metallic harmonic tone colour • Higher definite pitch • Same pitch on the twelfth fret • Longer value • <i>Legato</i> effect

Sound palette

Staccato-harmonic duotone exists as a fixed combination of two definite pitches. The interval between the fundamental and the harmonic is either in unison, an octave, an octave and a fifth, two octaves, or two octaves and a third. Theoretically, staccato-harmonic duotones are available on the frets where natural harmonics are produced. In practice, duotones on the fourth, fifth, seventh, and ninth frets on the bass strings are the most effective to use because the bass *staccato* layer has a distinctive contrast with the metallic harmonic layer. On the treble strings, this contrast in tone colour is somewhat reduced; as even though the harmonic layers are audible; the volume is much softer than the fundamental layer.

Figure 168: Staccato-harmonic duotones on the bass strings¹⁸

The figure displays three systems of musical notation, each representing a different bass string (6th, 5th, and 4th). Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef, set in 4/4 time. The notation shows the fundamental pitch (staccato) and the harmonic (diamond symbol) for five specific frets: IV, V, VII, IX, and XII. The 6th string system starts with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The 5th string system starts with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The 4th string system starts with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, and G#) and a common time signature (C). The notation for the staccato notes is a quarter note followed by a rest, and the harmonic notes are diamond symbols.

¹⁸ Recordings of staccato-harmonic duotones on the bass strings are provided on track 21.1 to 21.15 of the collection Solo Creative Works.

Figure 169: Staccato-harmonic duotones on the treble strings¹⁹

Figure 169 displays three staves of music, labeled 3rd, 2nd, and 1st, showing staccato-harmonic duotones on the treble strings. The music is in 4/4 time. Each staff shows five measures, corresponding to frets IV, V, VII, IX, and XII. The 3rd staff (top) shows harmonics marked with 8va and a diamond symbol. The 2nd staff (middle) shows harmonics marked with 8va and a diamond symbol. The 1st staff (bottom) shows harmonics marked with 8va and a diamond symbol. The bass lines in each staff show staccato notes corresponding to the frets: IV (F#), V (G), VII (A), IX (B), and XII (C).

Staccato-harmonic duotones on the second and third frets are not only difficult to produce but the harmonics are extremely soft and overpowered by the fundamentals.

Figure 170: Staccato-harmonic duotones on the second and third frets

Figure 170 displays a single staff of music showing staccato-harmonic duotones on the second and third frets. The music is in 4/4 time. The staff shows six measures, corresponding to frets II, III, II, III, II, and III. The harmonics are marked with 8va and a diamond symbol. The bass line shows staccato notes corresponding to the frets: II (D#), III (E), II (F), III (G), II (A), and III (B).

¹⁹ Recordings of staccato-harmonic duotones on the treble strings are provided on track 22.1 to 22.15 of the collection Solo Creative Works.

Figure 171: Same harmonic, different fundamental

The figure displays three systems of musical notation, each representing a different string on a guitar. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, with a 4/4 time signature. The systems are labeled as follows:

- 6th string:** The treble staff shows three diamond-shaped notes with a sharp sign (F#) on the first, second, and third lines, labeled IV, IX, and XVI respectively. The bass staff shows corresponding notes on the first, second, and third lines, also labeled IV, IX, and XVI.
- 5th string:** The treble staff shows three diamond-shaped notes with a sharp sign (F#) on the first, second, and third lines, labeled IV, IX, and XVI respectively. The bass staff shows corresponding notes on the first, second, and third lines, also labeled IV, IX, and XVI.
- 4th string:** The treble staff shows three diamond-shaped notes with a sharp sign (F#) on the first, second, and third lines, labeled IV, IX, and XVI respectively. The bass staff shows corresponding notes on the first, second, and third lines, also labeled IV, IX, and XVI.
- 3rd string:** The treble staff shows three diamond-shaped notes with a sharp sign (F#) on the first, second, and third lines, labeled IV, IX, and XVI respectively. The bass staff shows corresponding notes on the first, second, and third lines, also labeled IV, IX, and XVI.
- 2nd string:** The treble staff shows three diamond-shaped notes with a sharp sign (F#) on the first, second, and third lines, labeled IV, IX, and XVI respectively. The bass staff shows corresponding notes on the first, second, and third lines, also labeled IV, IX, and XVI.
- 1st string:** The treble staff shows three diamond-shaped notes with a sharp sign (F#) on the first, second, and third lines, labeled IV, IX, and XVI respectively. The bass staff shows corresponding notes on the first, second, and third lines, also labeled IV, IX, and XVI.

There are other combinations available for certain notes. If a fundamental of a duotone can be played on another fret of a different string, the new duotone will have the same fundamental but different harmonic. Similarly, when a harmonic of a duotone can be produced on a different string, the new duotone will have a different fundamental with the same harmonic. In duotones on the same string, each fundamental on the fourth fret, the ninth fret and the sixteenth fret is combined with the same harmonic.

Figure 172: Same fundamental, different harmonic

The musical score consists of three systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system contains diamond-shaped notes with circled numbers and Roman numerals. The bottom staff contains staccato notes. The notes are labeled as follows:

- System 1 (measures 1-6): ⑥ ix, ⑤ iv, ⑥ xii, ⑤ vii, ⑤ ix, ④ iv.
- System 2 (measures 7-12): ⑤ xii, ④ vii, ④ ix, ③ iv, ④ xii, ③ vii.
- System 3 (measures 13-18): ② ix, ① iv, ② xii, ① vii.

Octave markings (8va) are placed above the treble staff in measures 12, 15, and 18.

Conclusion

Staccato-harmonic duotone is a unique sound phenomenon where both the fundamental and the harmonic on the same fret of a guitar string are simultaneously audible. Each sound layer of a duotone has its own definite pitch, note value, articulation and tone colour. This method of sound production opens a new resource in guitar music which has never been possible before; in which a specific fret on a guitar string is perceived as a sound source of two distinctive layers. *Nocturne* is an early study of compositional applications for the staccato-harmonic duotone. In the future, the awareness of this duo-sound source in the process of composing for the guitar promises interesting new possibilities in guitar music.

APPENDIX VIII: TÀI TỬ MUSIC: LOST IN TRANSLATION

Introduction

Tài tử music emerged in the late nineteenth century and still has a strong connection with people's lives in Southern Vietnam today. Musicologists have referred to this genre in French as “*musique des amateurs*” and English as “*music of amateurs*”, based on a social characteristic that professional musicians never used it for professional purpose but only for leisure; and performances held as part of informal gatherings, rather than within formal concert settings.

Originating from the ritual music of Nhã nhạc, a genre of Vietnamese court music, and Huế music in the Central region, the music has developed into a new genre which rapidly becomes popular in the South (Pham 1975, 100-110) (V. K. Trần 1962, 98-106). The music is written for solo instruments but also performed as an ensemble. In the early days, the main instruments were ‘đàn kìm’ (two-string plucked instrument), ‘đàn gáo’ (two-string bowed instrument), and ‘đàn tranh’ (sixteen string zither). Later, other string instruments and singers have also been used in the ensembles. For more than a century, Tài tử music has had a strong connection with people's lives in Southern Vietnam. Performances are now seen in all levels of society from social gatherings, festivals, concert halls and academic conferences. In 2011, Vietnam submitted this genre to be considered as a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The translations of the term Tài tử music have been problematic. Trainor warned that “inaccurate and inappropriate terms have been used to describe the Nhạc tài tử” (Trainor 1977, 35). Many Vietnamese scholars have recognised that the meaning still needs further research (Mai 2007) (T. M. Nguyễn 2011) (V. K. Trần, Trần Văn Khê và Âm nhạc dân tộc 2000). This paper will investigate the semantic, musical and social

contexts of the term ‘tài tử’, endeavouring to bring a new light to the issue. With new evidence from the French records of its role in promoting Indochina culture; and with reference to the recent Vietnamese scholarly work, which illustrates how this music genre has evolved since the late nineteenth century to the present day, this paper will address the issue as to whether it is appropriate to translate from Vietnamese the generic term ‘tài tử’.

Lost in semantics

Musicologists have referred to Tài tử music in French as “musique des amateurs” since 1956 (V. K. Trần 1962) and in English as “amateur music” (Pham 1975), “amateurs’ music” (T. P. Nguyễn 1998), “music for amateurs” (T. H. Lê 1991), and recently “music of the talented amateurs” (Cannon 2011). The term ‘tài tử’ originated from Sino-Vietnamese and has evolved with different meanings. My research investigating how the term was used in its emerging period from the nineteenth century to the 1940s, however, has found no reference to ‘amateur’ in both Vietnamese and French sources.

In Nguyễn Du’s *The Tale of Kiều* (written around 1810 – 1820), an epic poem that is recognised as the most important in Vietnamese literature, the term ‘tài tử’ was used to describe the ‘fine men’: “Dập dìu ‘tài tử’ giai nhân” (On parade, ‘fine men’, beauteous women)²⁰ (Huỳnh 1983, 4). Nguyễn Công Trứ (1778–1858), another influential writer in the nineteenth century, wrote “Tài-tử với giai-nhân tế ngộ nan” (It is difficult for fine men to meet beauteous women). Both Nguyễn Du and Nguyễn Công Trứ considered themselves as the ‘Nhà nho tài tử’ (Tài tử poet), a term which referred to the elite of Vietnamese society in the nineteenth century (N. V. Trần 1995, 83).

²⁰ Original translation: “Fine men and beauteous women on parade”

According to the first Vietnamese dictionary (1895), written in ‘Chữ Quốc ngữ’ and compiled by Huỳnh Tịnh Paulus Của, the term ‘tài tử’ originally meant (1) person who has a particular talent “Kẻ có tài riêng”; (2) person who specialises in traditional music “kẻ chuyên về cổ nhạc”; and (3) instrumentalist “nhạc công” (Huỳnh 1895, 328). In the first Vietnamese-French dictionary which is still widely used today because of the quality of its scholarship, Genibrel, who was a French Missionary Apostolic in Saigon, translated ‘tài tử’ as ‘exceedingly gifted person’, “homme excessivement bien doué”; and also as gifted with many talents “Doué de beaucoup de talents” (Genibrel 1898). Earlier in 1903, the French term ‘amateur’ appeared in the *Lexique Franco-Annamite* (French – Annamite Dictionary) suggesting the meaning as a ‘lover’ of something: ‘person who likes something particular’ “Kẻ thích sự gì riêng” (Ravier and Dronet 1903, 18). This finding suggests that there was no connection between the term ‘tài tử’ and ‘amateur’ up to the early twentieth century.

Until the 1930s, Đào Duy Anh still recorded ‘tài tử’ as ‘talented person’ “người có tài” with annotation in French as ‘homme de talents’ (Đào 1932, 223). This was consistent with the Vietnamese Dictionary (Việt-Nam Tự-điển) of the Association for the Intellectual and Moral Advancement of the Annamese (²¹), which also noted ‘tài tử’ as (1) ‘talented person’ with a reference to literary use by Cao Bá Quát (1809 – 1855): ‘Talented man and beautiful woman are destined’, “Tài-tử với giai-nhân là nợ sẵn”; and (2) ‘person who specialises in music’, “người chuyên về âm nhạc” (Hội Khai Trí Tiến đức 1931, 504).

The year 1951 saw the first annotation of ‘tài-tử’ as ‘amateur’, as the second entry after ‘talented person’ in Đào Văn Tập’s Vietnamese Dictionary (Tự-điển Việt-Nam Phổ

²¹ French: Association pour la Formation Intellectuelle et Morale des Annamites; Vietnamese: Hội Khai Trí Tiến Đức.

Thông): ‘to refer to a person who specialises in an art, through the love for it, but does not use his talent to earn a living’, “Chỉ người chuyên về một nghệ thuật nào, chỉ vì thích nghệ thuật đó, chứ không phải dùng tài để mưu sinh” (V. T. Đào 1951, 547).

Later in 1958, Thanh Nghị noted in his dictionary (Tự-điển Việt-Nam) that the meaning of ‘talented person’ had become less used. There was also a new meaning as ‘artist’ “Nghệ sĩ”, with the French translation ‘artiste’. In the last entry, he gave a good description of ‘tài-tử’ as ‘amateur’: “to refer to a person who engages in a field because of the love for it, but not for a professional purpose. Professional, amateur. Amateur.” (“để chỉ một người chơi một môn gì chỉ vì thích mà chơi, chứ không phải làm nghề riêng. Nhà nghề, tài-tử. Amateur.”) (Thanh-Nghị 1958, 1167).

In the semantic context, these findings show that until the 1940s the term ‘tài tử’ was not used as ‘non-professional’ or ‘amateur’ but quite the opposite; that is to indicate the “fine”, “talented” “elite” people and/or “specialised” “musicians” of “traditional music”. The translations associated with ‘amateur’ lost the original meaning, and imposed a contradictory meaning to what the term ‘tài tử’ actually meant during the late nineteenth century to 1940s. With these translations, a social context became attached which assumed that practitioners of Tài tử music were in fact ‘amateurs’, a matter that was yet to be investigated.

Lost in social context

In the social context, most musicologists considered Tài tử music as ‘amateur music’. This is largely based on the social characteristics of the music which assumed that professional musicians never used it for professional purposes but only for leisure; and performances held as part of informal gatherings, rather than within formal concert settings (V. K. Trần 2000, 349) (T. P. Nguyễn 1998) (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 15-19). The English and French translations seem to have been directly influenced by this

assumption. My research into the social development of Tài tử music from the late nineteenth century to the twenty-first century, however, has manifested contradictory evidence of those characteristics.

A closer look into the music profession within Vietnamese society during the late nineteenth century has revealed that most masters actually worked as private teachers, and/or professional performers, or both. The pioneer masters such as Nguyễn Quang Đại, Nguyễn Liêng Phong, Lê Tài Khi, Kinh Lịch Quờn, Phạm Đăng Đàn were professional teachers who gave lessons in Saigon and the Six Southern Provinces. Teachers at this time were highly respected and very well-paid. A document noted that the fees to learn a song in *Tứ Đại Oán* with the master Nguyễn Tùng Bá was five Indochine Piastres; plus during the learning period, the student also had to provide accommodation and lavish meals, even with French wine! (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 45).²²

My research has identified that even though Tài tử music has been widely performed by the amateurs at informal gatherings, it has been also performed at concert venues and major events from its very earliest development. My earlier research has found that Tài tử music was chosen to represent the musical culture of French Indochina at the Paris World Exposition in 1900. The instrumental and vocal performance of Tài tử music together with the dance of the French superstar Cléo de Mérode at the Théâtre Indo-Chinois (Theatre of Indochina) was a huge success (figure 173). The performance lasted for five months and received much attention from French media. The prominent French musicologist Julien Tiersot was at this Exposition and wrote about Tài tử music in his *Notes d'Ethnographie Musicale*, which included the music score that dictated the pieces performed at this Exposition (Tiersot 1905).

²² As a general guide for its value, a ship ticket from Saigon to Singapore was 57.40 Piatres, to Manila it was 76.50 Piatres

(<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57740745.image.langEN.r=annuaire%20statistique%20de%20l'indochine.swf>).



Figure 173: Tàì tử musicians with the French ballerina Cléo de Mérode at the 1900 Paris World Exposition (Mérode c1985) (Le Panorama Nouvelle Serie 1900)

Six years later, Tàì tử music was again chosen to be performed at the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille. A document written by the delegates of the Cochinchina General Government (Gouvernement General de L'Indo-chine) included a photograph of tàì tử musicians at the 1906 Marseille Colonial Exposition (figure 174) (Ferrière, Joseph et al 1906). According to the Vietnamese source, these musicians were in Nguyễn Tổng Triều's group in Mỹ Tho. There were no records of who actually performed at the Exposition, only records that in 1910 the group included Tổng Triều, 'đòn kìm'; Mười Lý, 'tiêu'; Chín Quán, 'đàn độc huyền'; Bảy Vô, 'đàn cò'; cô Hai Nhiều, 'đàn tranh'; cô Ba Đắc, singer (Mai 2007, 51) (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 57).



Figure 174: Vietnamese musicians at the 1906 Exposition Coloniale de Marseille
(Ferrière, Joseph et al)

After returning from France, Nguyễn Tống Triều's group began to perform regularly at the Minh Tân Hotel in Mỹ Tho from 1911. Seeing these concerts attracted large audiences, the owner of the nearby Casino Theatre invited this group to perform on Wednesday and Saturday nights before the screening of movies. These performances also attracted large audiences and were very well-received (V. K. Trần 1966). Since 1914, many tài tử groups from the Southern Provinces were invited to Saigon to give concerts at the Hôtel de Mekong ('Cửu Long Giang Hotel', Mekong Hotel), which was a famous meeting place for Saigon's influential writers, poets, journalists and intellectuals (Vương 1993). The French connection gave tài tử musicians further

opportunities to perform overseas at the Paris International Colonial Expositions in 1931 and 1938.

A new form of Tài tử performance, Ca ra bộ (Singing with gestures) emerged in the 1910s. Musicians in the theatrical groups Andre Thận of Sadec (1917) and Châu Văn Tú (1920) gave regular concerts at the Casino Theatre in Mỹ Tho. The rapid development of Ca ra bộ becoming Cải lương (Reformed Theatre) in the late 1910s created a new role for Tài tử music, whereby the theatrical characteristics are built on its musical features (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 61).

Larger groups of musicians were used for Cải lương productions, including Văn Hí Ban in Chợ Lớn; Tập Ích Ban in Thốt Nốt; Nghĩa Đồng Ban, Nam Đồng Ban, Tái Đồng Ban in Mỹ Tho. In Saigon, the Moderne Theatre and Eden Theatre hosted many productions including the groups Châu Văn Tú and Tân Thịnh from Mỹ Tho; and Trần Quang Quờn from Vinh Long (V. K. Trần 2000, 359). Many tài tử musicians became household names due to the frequent broadcasting of its music on National Radio and through commercial LP records that were imported from France by shipping.²³ The 1920s to 1975 was the prime period for the popular Cải lương, which saw tài tử musicians performing for professional purposes and earning a comfortable living (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 86).

The ‘professional’ characteristics of Tài tử music can also be seen through the academic trainings and publishing of books for teaching and learning purposes. The earliest books were available from the 1910s, including *Bản Đờn Tranh* (1907) published by

²³ An advertisement on *L'Ère Nouvelle* on 18 February 1927 noted that there were a few thousand imported records available on the coming shipment.

Phát Toàn; *Tứ Tài Tử* (1911); *Lục Tài Tử*, *Bát Tài Tử* and *Thập Tài Tử* (1915) printed by Imprimerie de l'Union.

Since its opening in 1956, the National School of Music (École Nationale de Musique) was established with a large Department of Traditional Music that included seventeen lecturers who were previously professional performers and/or private teachers. In the period 1956 to 1975, there were thousands of graduates from this institution, some of whom later became lecturers and professional performers around the country.

Since 1975, Tài tử music has been taught in all conservatories and schools of culture and arts in Vietnam (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 78-89). At present, students at conservatories in Vietnam are trained in three year to six year pre-tertiary programs and four year undergraduate programs in which Tài tử's performance repertoire is the core of teaching and learning (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 87). It is unconvincing and inappropriate to refer to those teachers and graduates as 'amateurs' or 'talented amateurs'. An exemplary case is Huỳnh Khải, the Head of Department of Traditional Music at the Ho Chi Minh Conservatory of Music, who has spent more than fifty years of his life performing, teaching, publishing and recording.

Lost in musical context

In the musical context, musicologists have considered that Tài tử music is in fact 'professional'. Nguyễn Vĩnh Bảo regarded it as a "highly bourgeois evolved art form, a type of music that has many facets whose beauty lies in an extremely subtle and melodic style...and practiced by professional or semi-professional people." (V. B. Nguyen 1970, 2-6). Tô Vũ categorised Tài tử music as a professional genre of Southern Vietnamese music since its earliest development (V. Tô 2002, 178-189). Trần Văn Khê noted that it takes many years of rigorous training to become a tài tử musician. Tô Ngọc Thanh recognised that Tài tử music is "professional" in its musical aspects but it has

been disseminated through the folk tradition (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 27). Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Liêm writes that the Tài tử repertoire is an exemplary model of academic music with folkloric characteristics (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 21). My research has found evidences which explain this consensus, including the repertoire of Tài tử music, its musical characteristics, and instrumental techniques and performing practices.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Tài tử music comprised of ‘Twenty Ancient Pieces’ (Hai Mươi Bản Tổ) which originated from the ritual music of Nhã nhạc. Based on these pieces, musicians have developed another fifty-two pieces to add to the repertoire which makes a total of seventy-two pieces (Thất Thập Nhị Huyền Công). The ability to perform the ‘ancient pieces’ is the minimum expected of a skilled musician. These pieces are the preserved melodic framework which are divided into four groups ‘Bắc’, ‘Lễ’, ‘Nam’, ‘Oán’:

1. **Bắc:** *Lưu Thủy Trường; Phú Lục Chấn; Bình Bán Chấn; Cổ Bản Trường; Xuân Tình Chấn; Tây Thi Trường* (six pieces).
2. **Lễ:** *Xàng Xê; Ngũ Đối Thượng; Ngũ Đối Hạ; Long Ngâm; Long Đăng; Vạn Giá; Tiểu Khúc* (seven pieces)
3. **Nam:** *Nam Xuân; Nam Ai; Đảo Ngũ Cung* (three pieces).
4. **Oán:** *Tứ Đại Oán; Phụng Cầu Hoàng; Giang Nam; Phụng Hoàng Cầu* (four pieces) (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 124-153)

The ‘ancient pieces’ are lengthy works which require many years of practice. In terms of duration in four-beat measure, *Lưu Thủy Trường* is the shortest with 128 measures; and *Giang Nam* is the longest with 464 measures. These pieces have well-balanced structures of three to eight sections (‘lớp’). A section is made up of four to sixteen phrases (‘câu’). Each phrase is either two or four or eight measures in length. There are rest measures without melody at the beginning and the end of certain phrases, which

allow the musician to improvise (in ‘chầu’) or perform specific percussive patterns on the body of his/her instrument (in ‘Mô’). A pattern used in the ‘Mô’ measures of *Tứ Đại Oán* is given below (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 197):

Figure 175: The ‘Mô’ measures of *Tứ Đại Oán*



In performing a particular piece, the musician needs to have a sound knowledge of the musical characteristics of the mode which the piece is based on. These include the appropriate scale, pitch relations, ornamentations, and instrumental techniques to deliver those specifications. An example of ornamentations for ‘Hoi Nam Xuân’ according to Trần Văn Khê is given in figure 176.

Figure 176: Ornamentations of ‘Hoi Nam Xuân’ (V. K. Trần 1962, 232)

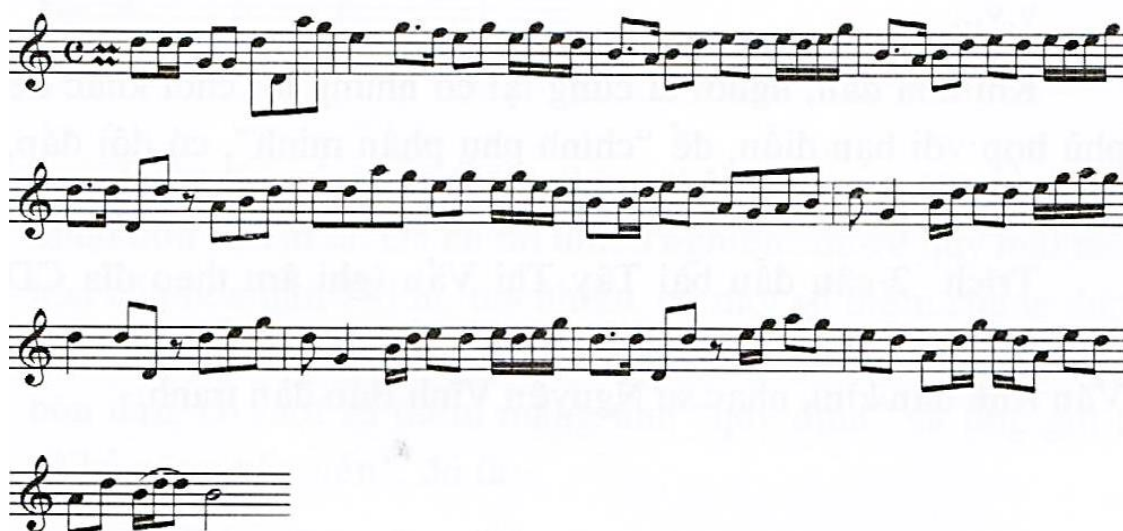


The improvisational nature is central to the performance practices of Tài tử music. The musician elaborates on the original melodies with his/her own interpretation as long as it adheres to the musical characteristics of the modality. Examples of the original melody of *Bình Bán Vắn* (figure 177) and an improvisational version (figure 178) are provided by Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Liêm (T. M. Nguyễn 2011, 255).

Figure 177: The original melody of *Bình Bán Vắn*



Figure 178: The elaborated version



In the musical context, my research has found strong evidence to support the consensus that Tài tử music is a highly developed musical genre. Based on the ritual music of Nhã nhạc, Tài tử repertoire comprises of challenging and complex compositions with rigid structures, specific use of scale materials and detailed instrumental expressive techniques. In practice, the performance of Tài tử music really depends on how the performers use those complex musical characteristics as the foundations to elaborate the original melodic framework. It is unlikely that those musical complexities are intended for the amateurs.

Recommendation

This paper has found that Tài tử music is an art form with structured theoretical and practical foundations which require a long period of rigorous training. It is inappropriate to use the 1940s meaning of ‘amateur’ to describe Tài tử music, a genre which emerged in the nineteenth century and fully developed in the 1930s. Its complex semantic, musical characteristics and challenging repertoire with improvisational skills have evolved to become an academic music genre of Southern Vietnam which has been widely performed by amateur and professional musicians. The translations associated with ‘amateur’ do not reflect the true semantic, social and musical contexts, and somewhat imply that Tài tử is inferior to other Vietnamese traditional music genres. Musicologists did not perceive a need to translate the original names for Javanese *Gamelan*, Indian *Khayal*, Japanese *Noh*, and even other Vietnamese *Quan họ*, *Chèo*, *Ca trù*, etc., it is time to return Tài tử music to its Vietnamese name.

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