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AN INITIAL CROSS GENRE STUDY  
USING SPECTROGRAM: A CASE OF  
XẨM HUÊ TÌNH “FLIRTING BEGGAR STYLE”

Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Liêm<sup>1</sup>, Phan Gia Anh-Thu<sup>2</sup> and Ngô Thanh Nhân<sup>3</sup>

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**English Abstract [222 words -- limit 250 words]**

This paper presents results from a case study of comparative folk music genres, using a pivotal lyrics *Xẩm Huê Tình* “Flirting in Beggar style.” The common instrumental style and a common folk poetry lyrics are expressed by different folk styles of *Ca Trù* “Tally Card songs”, *Chèo* “popular musical theater” and *Hát Xẩm* “folk songs of the blind traveling beggars.” Hát Xẩm artists used this style for their song *Dừa dại không gai* “Wild screw palm has no thorns”<sup>4</sup>.

A spectrogram of a song recording on YouTube is obtained for each style, which is a standard 3-dimensional matrix of **pitch** in *Hertz*, **intensity** in *Decibels* over **time** in *milliseconds*. We use spectrographic peak frequency curve (loudest pitch at each point in time) marked with lyric syllable onsets. This representation enables one to show melodic and lyric improvisation against the source common pivotal lyrics. The study aims to show how pivotal lyrics is stylistically improvised in corresponding music prosodies.

This method helps create reliable secondary data for further multi-disciplinary research, a big improvement of using manual transcriptions, because of the artificial European non-tempered pitches and equi-division time representation.

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<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Folklore, Professor, Faculty of Arts, Sài Gòn University, Hồ Chí Minh City, Việt Nam.

<sup>2</sup> Ph.D. program in Music Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, and fellow of the Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture and Society, Temple University, U.S.A.

<sup>3</sup> Ph.D. Linguistics, NYU Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Linguistic String Project, Medical Language Processing, and fellow/Adjunct Associate Director, Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture and Society, Temple University, U.S.A.

<sup>4</sup> Performed by Outstanding Artist Hà Thị Cầu, singing and playing *đàn nhị* “two-string fiddle”, accompanied by *trống mảnh* “twin lap drums” and *cặp kè* “twin wood clapper”, at <https://youtu.be/-C9pff7wZZE>, 3’45”, posted June 8, 2016.

**Keywords:** spectrogram, Chèo, Ca Trù, hát Xẩm music of the blind traveling beggars, pivotal lyrics, ...

## Short Biographies

**Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Liêm**, Associate Professor, Ph.D., Vice Director of Hồ Chí Minh City Conservatory of Music (2006 – 2016), and teaches at Department of Arts, Sài Gòn University (2017 – present). She is a member of the Executive Committee of the Vietnam Musician’s Association (2010 – present), a member of the Executive Committee of The Hồ Chí Minh City Music Association and a member of the Vietnamese Folk Arts Association. She is also a *đàn tranh* [16-string zither] and *đàn bầu* [monochord] musician.

Contact by email at [ngmyliem@yahoo.com.vn](mailto:ngmyliem@yahoo.com.vn) and [ngmyliem@gmail.com](mailto:ngmyliem@gmail.com)

Full CV: [http://mlp.cs.nyu.edu/folkmusic/CV\\_Nguyen-My-Liem\\_2018.htm](http://mlp.cs.nyu.edu/folkmusic/CV_Nguyen-My-Liem_2018.htm)

**Phan Gia Anh Thư**, M.A., Ed.M., Ed.D. student, *Music Education*, Teachers College - Columbia University (2015), is a piano teacher at Teachers College, Columbia University (2014 – present), a *Fellow* at the *Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture & Society* at Temple University, and an *Artist-in-residence* at Mekong NYC, focusing on cultivating traditional identities for children in the Bronx, New York, through music, visualization, and traditional games (2016 – present). She is also a *đàn bầu* [monochord] and *đàn kim* [moon lute] musician of the *Mekong Arts and Music* (2013 – present).

Contact by email at [agp2132@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:agp2132@tc.columbia.edu).

Full CV: [http://yeswecanmusic.us/aboutus/tara\\_phan.html](http://yeswecanmusic.us/aboutus/tara_phan.html)

**Ngô Thanh Nhân**, Ph.D. *Linguistics*, a scholar of New York University *Linguistic String Project* (1984-present), a fellow and Adjunct Associate Director of Temple University *Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture & Society* (Philadelphia, 2006-present), and a teacher of *đàn tranh* [16-string zither] at the *Folk Arts – Cultural Treasures Charter School*, Grades 3-8 (Philadelphia, 2009-present).

Contact by email at [nhan@cs.nyu.edu](mailto:nhan@cs.nyu.edu) or [nhan@temple.edu](mailto:nhan@temple.edu).

Full CV: <https://www.cs.nyu.edu/~nhan>

## References

1. Ca trù “Pansori performance” sung by Thuỳ Chi, accompanied by *đàn đáy* square lute and *phách* bamboo slab, 2012, at <https://youtu.be/VvcVpsEOrQs>, 3’42”, posted August 12, 2013. Or sung by Kiều Anh, accompanied by *đàn đáy* square lute and *phách* bamboo slab, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVdlb8mAYx4>, 5’38”, posted July 18, 2012.
2. <sup>1</sup> Chèo “popular theater”, sung by Outstanding Artist Thanh Bình, wood clapper and *đàn bầu* “monochord”, <https://youtu.be/cyeqw3RVsI>, 7’03”, posted June 22, 2016.
3. <sup>1</sup> Hát Xẩm “folk songs of the blind traveling beggars”, style Xẩm nhà trò “Theatrical Beggar genre” sung by Outstanding Artist Thanh Bình, accompanied by Xuân Hoạch on *đàn đáy* square lute, gõ bamboo slab, at <https://youtu.be/K6ftMgY2LG0>, 4’40”, posted April 17, 2015.
4. <sup>1</sup> Performed by Outstanding Artist Hà Thị Cầu, singing and playing *đàn nhị* “two-string fiddle”, accompanied by *trống mảnh* “twin lap drums” and *cặp kè* “twin wood clapper”, at <https://youtu.be/-C9pff7wZZE>, 3’45”, posted June 8, 2016.

<b>Pivotal lyrics</b>	<b>English translation</b>
Sông Thương nước chảy đôi dòng Đèn khêu đôi ngọn, em trông ngọn nào	The Love River runs in both directions The lamp has two wicks, which flame should I stare at
Tắm mát lên ngọn sông Đào Muốn an sim chín, tìm vào rừng xanh	If you want a fresh water, go to the source canal***. If you want ripe myrtle, go to the forest.
Tay em vít cả đôi cành Quả chín thời hái, quả xanh thời đừng	I grab both branches into my arms. No. Just pick the ripe ones, and leave the green
Ba bốn năm ăn ở trong rừng Chim kêu vượn hót, nửa mừng nửa lo	I have been living in the forest for three or four years now The birds cry, the gibbons cackle, I am half joyful and half anxious
Sa chân lỡ bước xuống đò Sông sâu sào vắn, khôn dò tới nơi	My feet had carried me into the boat The water is deep, my push pole too short, I can't reach the bottom to steer
Gió hiu hiu buồm ra khơi	The breeze was gentle, the sail carried me to the open water

\*\*\* A man made canal was dug to bring fresh water from Thái Bình River into Thương River, where family members parted their men going to serve at the borders with China. Hence the name Thương “Love”. Thương River runs in two directions where the Sim Rivulet “Myrtle” merges with it.

Sung lyrics	English translation
<p>&lt;đạo&gt;  <i>Dừa dai không gai</i>  <i>Chúng anh nghĩ rằng cây dừa dai không gai</i>  <i>Ai ngờ thì gai dừa lại dài hơn chông</i>  <i>Em dối anh, em chưa có chồng.</i>            &lt;lưu không&gt;</p>	<p>[Introduction]            Wild screw palm cone has no thorns            Us, guys, thought that the screw palm has no thorns            Who would know the thorns are longer than spikes            You lie to me, you are not married            [instrumental]</p>
<p><i>Nói dối anh em chưa có chồng</i>  <i>Hỏi con đâu có cô mình bế mình bồng trên tay</i>  <i>Hỏi cái gì nó lù lù trước ngực cô nàng may</i>  <i>Oản tẻ hay cặp bánh dày</i>  <i>Vừa trắng vừa xinh</i>  <i>Nhắc/nhắc thì coi qua, em nom thấy nó hữu tình</i>            &lt;lưu không&gt;</p>	<p>You lie to me, you are unmarried            Tell me, who's that baby you lull on your bosom            And what are those hanging out from your blouse            Altar offerings or a pair of rice cakes            They're as nice and white as lilies            At the first look, they are truly attractive            [instrumental]</p>
<p><i>Nhắc coi qua thời nom thấy hữu tình</i>  <i>Ướm hỏi cô mình, của lạ hay là của quen</i>  <i>Vào đây ngó/bóp cái anh xem</i>  <i>Muốn bạc hay muốn tiền</i>  <i>Chả tiếc cô mình làm chi</i>  <i>Anh cứ khuyên em chớ để nó làm gì</i>            &lt;lưu không&gt;</p>	<p>At the first look, they are truly attractive            I am curious, are they new or are they always so            Come here, take a peak at mine            What do you want, silver or money?            I would not spare even my last dime            I'm telling you, don't let them go waste            [instrumental]</p>
<p><i>Khuyên mấy em chớ để làm gì</i>  <i>Nữa một mai xóc xa xóc xếch xộc xà xộc xệch</i>  <i>Chả còn gì là cái xuân xanh</i>  <i>Cứ nghe anh chơi xuân mát ruột nó &lt;mát&gt; lại lành</i>            &lt;lưu không&gt;</p>	<p>I'm telling you, don't let them just hanging            Soon they'll all sag sadly            and pine not when the beauty has fled away            Listen, let's enjoy the youth, feel good and free            [instrumental]</p>
<p><i>Nghe mấy anh, chơi xuân mát ruột càng lành</i>    <i>Nam bức màn màn, thả lược các cô mình xem</i>  <i>Anh cứ chơi cho gãy khóa long then</i>  <i>Chơi cho mà oán tẻ, đi tìm cái cậu chuối xanh</i>  <i>Chả nghe anh mát ruột nó mà lành.</i>            &lt;kết&gt;</p>	<p>Listen, let's enjoy the youth, feel good and free            Drop the bamboo shades, let's see the comb            dropped and your hair free            Let locks break and doors unhinged            Enjoy your best, till the altar offerings cry for the            green banana            Listen to me, you'll feel good in the stomach and            your soul blessed            [instrumental conclusion]</p>