

DRAFT

**AN INITIAL APPROACH TO ANALYSIS OF
THE SOUTHERN VIETNAMESE ĐỒN CA TÀI TỬ
“AMATEUR ORCHESTRA”
USING A MUSIC PROCESSOR**

Phan Gia Anh-Thư, M.A. Ed.M. Music Education
Teachers College, Columbia University, New York
Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture & Society
Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

&

Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Liên,
Assoc. Prof., Ph.D. Department of Arts
Saigon University, Vietnam

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Abstract 240 words of 250 word limit

Đờn ca tài tử “Amateur orchestra” of Southern Vietnamese instrumental orchestras came into being from the tradition of southern ceremonial orchestra, a localized version of the royal orchestra tradition of Huế in the 1860’s. It spread out all over the south like wild fire, and took a center stage in the arts of improvisation with its distinct southern *điệu* modes and *hơi* airs that escape transcription and precise pitch representation. There has been a lot of research between the 1960’s until today without satisfactory results.

In this paper, based on fine spectrographic data (measured in Hertz, Decibels and milliseconds) extracted from an audio recording, the music processor (EMP), which consults multi-cultural music knowledge bases, first introduces layers of analyses over the spectrogram, such as western staves, section and phrase breaks, and beats to reveal “notes” (peak frequencies), and alternative layers of *chữ nhạc* “unit of melody” (or *syllamelis*, similar to *melisma*, of a regular meaningful music word covering a series of pitches). The goal is for the EMP to be able to apply the concept of adjacency over these pitch units to discover the song pitch patterns. The paper will then compare pitch patterns between improvisations of different artists of a music piece to arrive at a common *lòng bản* “skeletal version” between the improvisations. The paper will select one of the 20 *bài tổ* “core master pieces” performed by masters of *đờn ca tài tử* “amateur orchestra” for demonstration.