



# HỌC ĐÀN TRANH VIETNAMESE 16-STRING ZITHER FOR BEGINNERS

Thursday, March 3 – May 12, 2020

9:45 AM – 10:45 AM

POE PARK VISITOR CENTER  
192 GRAND CONCOURSE, BRONX NY 10458

BY  
PHAN GIA ANH THU & NGÔ THANH NHÀN  
MEKONG ARTS & MUSIC



Mekong aims to improve the quality of life of the Southeast Asian community in the Bronx and throughout New York City by achieving equity through community organizing and healing, promoting arts, culture, and language, and creating a safety net by improving access to essential social services. The Southeast Asian community in the Bronx primarily consists of Cambodian Americans and Vietnamese Americans.

Mekong is where history and culture are valued and learned, where history and culture are living, where people's needs are met, where people are united through struggle, and where the people feel liberated.

In partnership with Partnership for Parks and NYC Parks, Mekong NYC hosts a Vietnamese zither music class at Poe Park Visitor Center. We teach about students how to play the *đàn tranh* (Vietnamese zither). The class is infused with storytelling, especially Vietnamese folk tales and culture, community building through group playing and listening, and music theory, examining traditional Vietnamese and Cambodian songs and pop music. Classes end with a music recital so that students can share their skills with friends and family (about 20-30 guests).

Office:  
2471 University Avenue  
Bronx, New York 10468  
(347) 918-9220

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**Name of Student**

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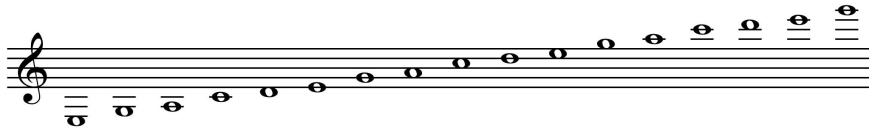
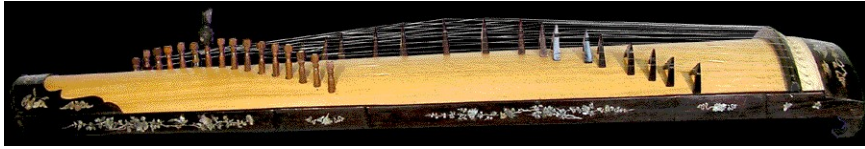
**Grade and Cluster**

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**Đàn Tranh No.**

# ĐÀN TRANH

## The Vietnamese Sixteen-String Zither



String	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Pitch	E <sup>3</sup>	G <sup>3</sup>	A <sup>3</sup>	C <sup>4</sup>	D <sup>4</sup>	E <sup>4</sup>	G <sup>4</sup>	A <sup>4</sup>	C <sup>5</sup>	D <sup>5</sup>	E <sup>5</sup>	G <sup>5</sup>	A <sup>5</sup>	C <sup>6</sup>	D <sup>6</sup>	E <sup>6</sup>	G <sup>6</sup>

Đàn Tranh is also known as *Đàn Thập Lục* or sixteen-stringed zither. Today, đàn tranh has **17 strings**. Đàn Tranh is considered a symbol of the Imperial City of Huế in Vietnam. Bigger đàn tranh's can have 19, 21, 22, 24 or 36 strings.

Đàn Tranh resembles a bamboo tube that has been sliced vertically in half. Toward the middle of the sound board there are 17 **bridges** (called *nhạn* "swallows") made of wood. At the narrower end of the box are 17 **pegs** (or *trục*) holding one end of the strings, for tuning. The strings are made of metal and tuned to a pentatonic scale.

Đàn Tranh sits flat like an auto-harp and is plucked using all four fingers. Players will usually wear **picks** on their fingers to facilitate *plucking*.

Đàn Tranh bears some likeness to the Japanese **Koto** (13 strings), the Korean **Kayagum** (12 strings), the Mongolian **Jatac** (12 strings), the Chinese **Zeng** (13-16 strings), and the Indonesian **Kachap** (7-24 strings).

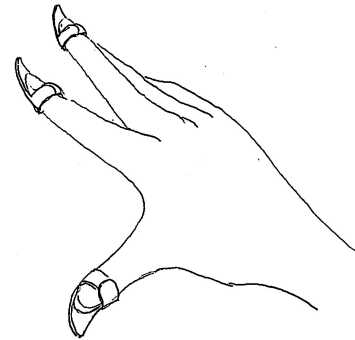
### Student's Responsibility

Students must come to class prepared, **with your own picks** (well

adjusted to your right hand), **your đàn tranh lesson booklet and music sheets**. These items are provided in class before-hand.

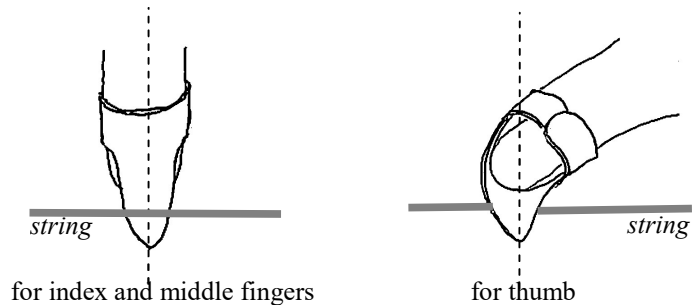
Students must take care of *đàn tranh* diligently at all times.

### Fingers, picks and strings



Picks are usually made of metal, horn or plastic. They can be adjusted to fit tightly on the thumb, the index, the middle, and sometimes the ring fingers. The thumb pick has a curly tip.

### Position of picks and rest stroke



Picks perpendicular to strings.

Index and middle finger picks pluck the strings so that the finger is straight and **perpendicular to the string**, using the **rest stroke** (plucking a string and resting on the next string). The tip of the thumb pick should also be perpendicular to the string, using the rest stroke.