

HÁT XẨM - RESTORING OR CREATING VIETNAMESE IDENTITY IN A NEW CONTEXT?

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The article surveys the origin of Hát Xẩm in history and its formation through different periods in Vietnam. In the past, Hát Xẩm played a significant role in the livelihoods of some disabled people and minstrels in rural and urban areas. At the same time, it elevated itself to a type of street art for folk artists who did not have any formal training. Socially, this art served as entertainment for the poor population who could not afford to watch official performances. On the other hand, the content of Xẩm is educational: teaching human morality, living with virtue, and criticizing bad habits. Moreover, during the war period, Hát Xẩm artists also knew how to employ it as a form of propaganda on political issues through their work at bus stations, piers, on trains, and at other crowded places.

The essay reviews the disappearance of this art and its recent recovery. Based on the overview of these issues, the article analyzes the process of restoring Hát Xẩm in order to explain whether the current phenomenon of Hát Xẩm is a restoration or rather a creation of cultural identity in the context of ongoing globalization.

Keywords: identity, new context, Hát Xẩm, creation, restoration, folklore.