

# HÁT XẨM – A CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NEED OF EMERGENCY PROTECTION

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Each form of Vietnamese folk performance has its own characteristics deriving from its locality and region. Hát Xẩm, however, is a form of singing that does not stay confined to a certain land or area but is associated with the minstrel's wandering nature. As a result many generations of folk artists have performed and popularized Hát Xẩm and developed their own characteristics as well as cultural and artistic values.

In term of content, Xẩm Hat is a unique folklore treasure, embracing material from fairy tales, myths, fables to chants, verse, proverbs and folk songs. Xẩm embodies many humane values. It is a profound literature that may praise the homeland, review historical traditions, attack social ills, educate human morality, condemn injustices in society, and generally reflect diverse picture of life.

In terms of art, Hát Xẩm refines the beauty and essence of traditional music genres such as chèo, ca trù, trống quân (military drums), cò lả, hát ví, hát ru (lullabies), quan họ, hò khoan... and yet, at the same time, it always has its own unmistakable characteristics. In the context of contemporary society, Hát Xẩm is at a very high risk of being lost. With such unique cultural and artistic values, Hát Xẩm deserves to be protected and promoted as a unique cultural heritage of the nation.

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