

# FROM THE STREET TO THE STAGE - THE TRANSFORMATION OF ART

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Xẩm is a type of folk music art in the North of Vietnam, popular in the Northern Delta and the Midlands. "Xẩm" is also used to refer to the artists who sing - usually blind people who go busking for a living; in this sense Hát Xẩm can be looked on as a profession. Traditionally, Xẩm artists have written most of their own lyrics, which are narratives of their own existences, the suffering of the poor, and the paradox of life.

So, from a form of folk singing practiced by visually impaired people to make a living at the corner of markets, wharfs, and rivers, Hát Xẩm has now transformed into an art form performed on stage, and is a Vietnamese intangible cultural heritage that is loved by many people. Throughout its development Hát Xẩm has always been close to the working people. The voice in Hát Xẩm is the voice of humanity. The sound of music accompaniment and singing express the stories of life with diverse and rich content, full of joy, anger, love, and hate.

Keywords: transformation, Hát Xẩm, art, stage, sidewalk