



### 1. Vong Co – 08:27

*Vong Co*

*Solo dan Tranh*

*Traditional Southern Vietnamese Opera [Cai Luong]*

*Arranged & performed by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

I arranged and recorded this piece in dedication to my teacher, Nguyen The Thiep. Master The Thiep devoted his entire life to the preservation of Vietnamese traditional music, and I am fortunate to have been his student. Besides teaching me on the dan Tranh, Master The Thiep also shared with me the rich culture and traditions of Southern Vietnamese Opera music, and helped me to go deeper into the music and heritage of my country. Master The Thiep passed away a little bit more than one hour before I arrived at his home for a lesson...this piece of music is just a small token of my gratitude to him for his guidance.

### 2. Gnossienne No. 3 – 04:49

*Solo dan Bau*

*Composed by Erik Satie*

*Arranged & performed on dan Bau and bass dan Tranh by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

When I first looked at the piano score of “Gnossienne No. 3”, I wondered how it would sound on dan Bau, the Vietnamese monocord. When I started to play it, I got lost in the many emotions revealed in this beautiful composition. After experimenting a bit with various approaches, it finally felt right when I began using my bass dan Tranh (16-string zither) to accompany the melody. The sound of these two Viet traditional instruments realizing an avant-garde minimalist French composition makes me excited about the possibilities of creating and combining new sounds and sharing my inner musical voice.

### 3. Three-Mountain Pass – 09:48

*Đèo Ba Đội*

*Solo Hang & Vocal*

*Composed & arranged by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

*Lyric adapted from Ho Xuan Huong*

*Vocal, Hang, and dan T'rung by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo.*

*Percussion and chanting by Jimi Nakagawa*

Immediately after first hearing the sound of the Hang (the modified steel drum invented in Switzerland), I knew I must play the instrument in one of my songs. The inspiration to write “Three-Mountain Pass” came last year when I was doing research for my piece with Kronos Quartet. The lyric was adapted from the poem “Three-Mountain Pass” by the 18th century female poet Ho Xuan Huong. I have admired her work



**KRONOS QUARTET:** For 40 years, San Francisco's Kronos Quartet—David Harrington (violin), John Sherba (violin), Hank Dutt (viola), and Jeffrey Zeigler (cello)—has combined a spirit of fearless exploration with a commitment to continually re-imagining the string quartet experience. In the process, Kronos has become one of the world's most celebrated and influential ensembles, performing thousands of concerts worldwide, releasing more than 50 recordings, collaborating with many of the world's most eclectic composers and performers, and commissioning more than 800 works and arrangements for string quartet. A Grammy winner, Kronos is also the only recipient of both the Polar Music Prize and the Avery Fisher Prize. With a staff of ten, the non-profit Kronos Performing Arts Association (KPAA) manages all aspects of Kronos' work, including the commissioning of new works, concert tours and home-season performances, and education programs. For more information, visit [www.kronosquartet.org](http://www.kronosquartet.org).

since I was a little girl. Ho Xuan Huong's daring voice and multi-layered meanings in her poems are a pleasure for any reader. Through this piece, I am hoping to share my emotions, desires, and thoughts with the rest of the world. The music is rooted in A Dao (sung poetry) and Chau Van (medium's trance singing) Viet music.

*Three-Mountain Pass*

*Poem by Ho Xuan Huong, Translated by John Balaban*

*A cliff face. Another. And still a third.*

*Who was so skilled to carve this craggy scene:*

*The cavern's red door. The ridge's narrow cleft,*

*The black knoll beared with little mosses*

*A twisting pine bough plunges in the wind,*

*Showering a willow's leaves with glistening drops?*

*Gentlemen, lords, who could refuse, though weary*

*And shaky in his knees, to mount once more?*



Kronos Quartet

**PRODUCERS:** Terri Winston/Women's Audio Mission, Van-Anh Vanessa Vo **PROJECT CONCEPT:** Van-Anh Vanessa Vo **ARTISTIC ADVISOR:** David Harrington **SOUND RECORDING ENGINEERS:** Laura Dean & Terri Winston **ASSISTANT SOUND ENGINEER:** Jenny Thornburg **MIXING:** Laura Dean **MASTERING:** Piper Payne at Michael Romanowski Mastering **ARTWORKS:** MinhQuang Nguyen & Vi Tuong Nguyen **PHOTOS:** Christina Jade, Jason Lew, Nguyen A and Michael Wilson (Kronos Quartet) **RECORDED** at Women's Audio Mission

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#### 4. Green River Delta – 04:41

*Lưu Thủy Trường*

*Composed by Kim Sinh*

*Arranged by Jacob Garchik*

*Performed by Kronos Quartet*

*David Harrington, violin*

*John Sherba, violin*

*Hank Dutt, viola*

*Jeffery Zeigler, cello*

*dan Tranh by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

I am very lucky to have been an apprentice under several master musicians. One of my teachers was the blind artist Kim Sinh. When Kronos Quartet and I began working together, we always had the goal of playing a Viet traditional piece together. The idea of utilizing a classical string quartet to express and present Vietnamese Southern Opera is a challenging but boundary-pushing idea. David Harrington and I listened together to many pieces and decided “Luu Thuy Truong” by Kim Sinh was the right piece for this collaboration. This music possesses a purity which helps me express my point of view to the world.



#### 5. Mourning – 04:43

*Hồn Khóc*

*Three dan Baus*

*Composed & arranged by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

*Three dan Baus by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

The inspiration to write “Mourning” for three dan Baus came when I was listening to Viet funeral music. I grew up listening to the experiences that my North Vietnamese parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and people around me had during the Vietnam War. After moving to the US, I continued to meet people, mostly from South Vietnam, who also directly experienced or were affected by the war. Listening to stories from both sides, I realized that the war brought a big loss to everyone involved, no matter who “won”. “Mourning” is my own cry for the losses that all civilians suffered. However, I hope this cry not only increases understanding, but also helps to keep anything like that from happening again.

The arrangement for this piece is unique: the dan Bau is traditionally a solo instrument; there is never more than one dan Bau in any kind of Viet traditional ensemble. However, to me the dan Bau is like the human voice (and can mimic the tones of Vietnamese speech), and each dan Bau has the potential to be utilized as a separate individual voice. I needed three voices to express the complex emotions of this piece.

#### 6. The Legend – 06:41

*Huyền Thoại Mẹ*

*Solo dan Tranh & Vocal*

*Composed & arranged by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

*dan Tranh and vocal by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

*Percussion by Jimi Nakagawa*

*Keyboard by Frances Martin*

All Vietnamese children grow up with the Legend of Au Co and Lac Long Quan. After the immortal fairy Au Co marries the dragon king Lac Long Quan, Au Co gives birth to 100 eggs. Those 100 eggs later hatch into 50 boys and 50 girls. To populate the land, the immortal fairy Au Co took 50 children up to the mountain and the dragon king Lac Long Quan took another 50 children down to the sea. According to the legend, these are the ancestors of Viet people.

#### 7. Go Hunting – 06:24

*Đi Săn*

*Solo dan T’rung*

*Composed & arranged by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

*T’rung by Van-Anh Vanessa Vo*

*Percussion by Jimi Nakagawa*

The sound of the minority hill tribe Southern Highland bamboo xylophone T’rung is featured in the piece, along with a Japanese taiko drum. This may seem to be an odd combination because the T’rung can be easily drowned by the powerful sound of the taiko. However, this challenge was a great motivation for me to work on a high energy, beat-driven piece!

**BIOGRAPHY:** Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ comes from a family of musicians, and began studying traditional Vietnamese music and the đàn Tranh (16-string zither) at the age of four. She graduated with distinction from, and subsequently taught at, the Vietnam National Academy of Music in Hanoi. In 1995, Võ won the Vietnam National Đàn Tranh Competition, along with the first prize for best solo performance of modern folk music. In Hanoi, Võ was an ensemble member of the Vietnam National Music Theatre as well as a member of the traditional music group Đồng Nội Ensemble, which she founded and directed. She has performed throughout Vietnam and many other countries.

Living in the San Francisco Bay Area since 2001, Võ’s career has focused on collaborating with musicians across different musical genres to create new works, bringing Vietnamese traditional music to a wider audience, and preserving her cultural legacy through teaching. Among her compositions are the 2009 Emmy® Award-winning soundtrack for the documentary “Bolinao 52”, which she co-composed and recorded, and the soundtrack for 2003 Academy Awards® nominee “Daughter from Danang”, as well as the winner of the New Orleans Film Festival Audience Award “A Village Called Versailles”. Võ has released two CDs: “Twelve Months, Four Season” in 2002 and “She’s Not She” in 2010. Võ also has presented her music at Carnegie Hall, 2012 London Olympic Music Festival, and Lincoln Center.

“Three-Mountain Pass” contains Võ’s original works from 2011 to 2012. Võ is honored to have Kronos Quartet as guest artist on Track 4, Green River Delta.

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