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This paper is devoted to different genres of call-and-response songs in Vietnam. The call-and-response song is an antiphonal song dialogue between female and male singers. The main differences between the genres of call-and-response are related to the location and the season when they are performed. Antiphonal singing of this kind is not a distinctive feature of Viets. Similar types of singing are widely represented throughout the country among different ethnic minorities. Moreover, song dialogues are also widespread among the ethnic minorities of China and in other countries of East and South-East Asia. In Vietnam these genres have become extremely popular and exist in a variety of forms.

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Folk song is an important component of the culture of any nation. Different aspects of everyday life are accompanied by folk songs: they are sung during work and leisure, in joy and in sorrow, in private life and during rites. Song culture reflects life in its diversity, and therefore it is important material for research.

Song lore has always played an important role in Vietnam. Folk songs had a significant influence on Vietnamese classical poetry: for example, Vietnamese fine poetry is often written in folk song metres. “The Tale of Kiều” poem of Nguyễn Du, which is considered an enduring masterpiece of Vietnamese poetry, is written in the folk song metre of *lục bát*. This poem is so consonant with the Vietnamese folklore that many of its verses became folk songs, and it is sometimes impossible to tell whether the author used folk poetry in his poem, or the people used citations from the poem in songs. The interest and love for folk singing continues in Vietnam today. A lot of effort is put into saving the song lore: professional folk song bands are formed throughout the country, many materials on Vietnamese folklore are published, the folk genre of *quan họ* has been included into the UNESCO Intangible culture heritage of humanity list and there are plans to include other genres into this list.

This article is study of call-and-response songs, which are represented in the Vietnamese song lore in a variety of genres. Call-and-response songs (Vietnamese *hát đối đáp*) are a kind of song dialogue between female and male singers, that usually has an improvisational character. Historically, this type of genres goes back to so-called “seasonal marriage” rites, which are typical for Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. According to Stratanovich, these rites include ceremonies of “meetings”, that are usually connected with sowing or with spring in whole, in the East Asia and “bride-shows”, “trial meetings”, “spring jokes” in the South-East Asia as well as traditional rites aimed to consolidate the unity of young people of both sexes. The components of these “meetings” vary from ethnic group to ethnic group. It is important to emphasize that for peoples of the Thai ethnic group, the Hmong-Mien ethnic group, the Khmer Loeu and the Mon people preferable seasons for “meetings” are spring, time of the rites that stimulate fertility, and autumn – time of marriage contracts [Stratanovich 1987]. These rites were also accompanied by antiphonal improvisational singing, playing the flute, dancing and games in different combinations. Rites, that employed sexual intercourse as a means to ensure the fruitfulness of the earth, are not the distinguishing feature of peoples of East and South-East Asia. James Frazer in his famous work “The Golden Bough” describes rites of this kind in culture of different ethnic groups, including the Pipiles of Central America, ethnic groups of Java, the Baganda of Central Africa and others. Moreover, in various parts of Europe customs have prevailed both at spring

and harvest which are clearly based on the same crude notion that the relation of the human sexes to each other can be so used as to quicken the growth of plants [Frazer 1922].

Different genres of call-and-response songs that are common in Vietnam, generally are performed in spring or in autumn, but they do not have a direct connection with agrarian cults and marriage rites. However, in the past in Vietnam was popular such genre as hát nõ nường, which was connected with the fertility cult. In translation from Vietnamese “hát” means “singing”, “nõ” and “nường” are the phallic and yonic organs. In particular, in Liêm Thuận commune of Hà Nam province nõ nường love songs were performed during ceremony, that took place in the first decade of the new year [Dementieva-Leskinen 1993:70]. The same ceremonial is traced in Hà Lộc commune of Phú Thọ province, where during the rite male and female singers should couple wooden images of phallic and yonic organs covered with red lacquer. This action should be accompanied with singing [Việt Hưng].

The main purpose of this study is to identify similar and unique traits of genres of call-and-response songs in Vietnam, to distinguish their place in Vietnamese song lore and to characterize the most popular genres of this kind.

1. The history of the study of Vietnamese call-and-response songs.

The interest in national song lore and sequent collecting of folk songs started quite late – on the cusp of the 18th and 19th centuries [Nikulin 1977:220]. Exactly at that time Vietnamese Confucians made the first records of Vietnamese folk songs, which they compared with *Yuefu* songs (樂府) and the Book of Songs (*Shijing*, 詩經). Confucians were not interested in song rites or music, the main object of their interest was poetry. Idea of identifying of Vietnamese folk poetry with *Shijing* songs had an effect on even the contemporary Vietnamese song lore studies tradition of applying to the Vietnamese folk songs such concepts as *fu* 賦 (Vietn. *phủ*), *bi* 比 (Vietn. *tỉ*) and *xing* 興 (Vietn. *hưng*). These are the three most important expressive means, that are used in the Book of Songs: *fu* is direct description of the person, event, interesting facts so that the listener could easily create in his mind an image; *bi* is comparison; *xing* is use in the song the image that does not have direct relation to the main subject of the song, in other words, an introduction [Vũ Ngọc Phan 1958:40].

Some works on folk music in general and different musical genres can be found in the writings of European researchers. The first issues devoted to Vietnamese folk music were made by French scholars and belong to the period when Indochina was a French colony. The earliest of these studies were made in the beginning of the 20th century. Among them were such works as

Le Bris “Musique annamite, airs traditionnels” (1922), Knosp “La musique indochinoise” (1912). Dumoutier in “Les chants et les traditions populaires des annamites” (1890) examines musical instruments, folk genres and gives translations of folk songs. In particular Dumoutier examines such genre of call-and-response songs as hát trống quân. Among works of European researchers of mid-20th century is chapter “La musique et le chant” in “Connaissance du Vietnam” of Pierre Huard and Maurice Durand (1954).

At present time national folklore is studied extensively in all aspects in Vietnam. Genres of song lore are examined in following works: Nguyễn Chung Anh “*Hát ví Nghệ Tĩnh*” (“Vi Singing of Province Nghe Tinh”, 1958), Nguyễn Đông Chi “*Hát giặm Nghệ Tĩnh*” (“Hat giam of Nghe Tinh Province”, 1963), Ninh Việt Giao “*Hát Phường vải (Dân ca Nghệ Tĩnh)*” (“Hat Phuong vai (Folk Song Genre of Nghe Tinh Province)”), Trần Linh Quý, Hồng Thao “*Tìm hiểu Dân ca Quan họ*” (“Research on Quan ho Singing”, 1997), Trần Việt Ngũ “*Hát Trống Quân*” (“Folk Song Genre *Trong quan*”, 2002), Lư Nhất Vũ, Lê Giang, Lê Anh Trung “*Lý trong dân ca người Việt*” (*Ly songs in Vietnamese folk song*) and in many others.

Information about genres of Vietnamese song lore in Russian can be found only in PhD theses of the Vietnamese specialists, which were defended in USSR in 1970's-80's. For example, in such works as “The essential features of Vietnamese traditional music” of Nguyen Van Nam (1981) and “Song lore and modern mass song in Vietnam” of Doãn Nho (1982).

This working paper is the first English-language attempt to characterize Vietnamese call-and-response songs and to explore common and unique traits of different genres of this kind.

2. *Hát quan họ*

The most famous genre of call-and-response songs in Vietnam is the *quan họ* song of the Bắc Ninh province. *Quan họ* is connected with two periods of the year. First of all, it is the Vietnamese New Year (*Tết Nguyên Đán, Tết cả*), the most important festival, the celebration of the beginning of spring. Tết is observed in the period between the two seasons: the harvest of month 10, when all the agricultural works are finished, and the spring sowing (Dementieva-Leskinen 1993:41). In spring people of the Bắc Ninh and Bắc Giang provinces sang *quan họ* songs from day 4 of the new year until day 28 of the second lunar month, that is, for three months (Trần Linh Quý, Hồng Thao 1997:18).

Furthermore, the *quan họ* singing was also performed during the eighth month. The eighth month of the Vietnamese calendar is the time of another celebration – the Mid-Autumn Festival (Tết Trung Thu), the second most important celebration in the Vietnamese calendar.

As regards the poetry of the *quan họ* song, the majority is written in the most common Vietnamese metre of *lục bát*. The *lục bát* strophe consists of two lines, the first of six syllables and the second of eight (*lục* is the Sino-Vietnamese for six, and *bát* is eight). Besides, some *quan họ* songs are written in the tetrasyllabic metre and other less common metres of folk poetry.

The *quan họ* singing is considered the most ancient genre of call-and-response songs. According to some Vietnamese specialists, it dates back to the Lý and Trần dynasties (1010-1400). Trần Linh Quý and Hồng Thao affirm that it was in this period, when Đại Việt asserted its independence from China, that significant cultural changes took place. This is when sentimental call-and-response songs took shape as a new art with its own principles and techniques (Trần Linh Quý, Hồng Thao 1997:65). In fact, there is almost no information about music, poetry or performing of folk songs before 19th century.

Researchers note that there are a lot of rules and ceremonials connected with *hát quan họ*. Before the beginning of singing, participants should establish agreements with prospective partners (Vietn. *kết bạn*), in other words a group of male singers should agree with a group of female singers. There were different types of arrangements between singing groups: in some villages, one group could make arrangements for a period of two years with two or three other groups, in others – an agreement between the two singing groups could be valid throughout the period of existence of those groups [Trần Linh Quý, Hồng Thao 1997:38]. It is believed, that singing partners should not marry each other [Đặng Văn Lung 1978:33].

Quan họ songs could be performed in the open air or indoors, sometimes singers could perform standing in the boats [Một số vấn đề về dân ca quan họ 1972:62]. Singing in the open air was practiced mainly in the days of festivities. There commonly were three parts to *hát quan họ*: the mutual greeting of female and male singers, during which the receiving party should offer to guests betel and areca nuts (symbol of the greeting and the beginning of conversation), the main part (the performing of songs) and the farewell [Trần Linh Quý, Hồng Thao 1997:50-2]. This three-part structure is in general also appropriate for others genres of call-and-response songs (*hát ví*, *hát trống quân* and others).

It is believed that the main part of *quan họ* performance also consists of three parts. The first of these parts is known as *hát lễ lời*. Unfortunately it is impossible to determine the period,

when appeared this concept of quan họ performing and accompanying terminology. Everything about performing of quan họ songs was recorded by the Vietnamese researchers in 20th century. However the interpretation of terms connected with this genre is a problem, because terms are often not easily translated, moreover, sometimes it is difficult to understand what the term means. In particular, *hát lễ lối* can be translated like “traditional singing”. Following parts of quan họ performance are called *hát vặt* and *hát giã bạn* consequently. “*Giã bạn*” means farewell so it is the last part. During *hát lễ lối* the most ancient tunes (in Vietnamese terms – *giọng*) are performed, for example *hừ la, la rằng, đương bàn, tình tang, cây gạo* [Trần Linh Quý, Hồng Thao 1997:23-4, *Một số vấn đề về dân ca quan họ* 1972:132, 196]. There are references that formerly there were 36 traditional tunes in quan họ singing, but up to the present time only 5-6 of them remain [Trần Linh Quý p.24]. It is obvious that “36 tunes” is no more than a figurative expression, as number 36 has abstract meaning and often appears in different Vietnamese names (for example, “36 streets” district in Hanoi (Vietn. 36 phố phường), song “36 species of birds” (Vietn. “36 thứ chim”) etc.) Ethnomusicologist Trịnh Lai notes, that these songs are slow, their diapason is narrow and melodies are monotone [*Một số vấn đề về dân ca quan họ* 1972:196].

During the next part, called *hát vặt*, songs that are supposed to be less ancient are performed. Researcher Mã Giang Lân thinks that this part is the main one [*Một số vấn đề về dân ca quan họ* 1972:132]. *Hát giã bạn* has no fundamental differences to *hát vặt*, but the songs which are performed during this part are about parting, for example, “Người ơi đừng về” “Don't leave” [*Một số vấn đề về dân ca quan họ* 1972:197]. As mentioned above, unfortunately it is impossible to determine, when this three-part performance was formed. Despite the fact that there are a lot of mentions of more and less ancient songs, in the works of the Vietnamese researchers there are no references to sources that could clarify why these songs are considered to be more or less ancient, and when exactly the most ancient songs appeared.

Information about the early period of existing of call-and-response songs is desultory, although some indirect references can be found in the chronicles. There are numerous legends about the origins of different genres of call-and-response songs. Of course, they can not be used as the source of information about history of formation of genres, but they are of interest, because they give an opportunity to understand how the Vietnamese themselves comprehend these genres. There are several legends illustrating the origins of this genre. According to one of them, *quan họ* arose in two adjacent villages - Lũng Giang and Tam Sơn. People of these villages visited each other on festive days and for ceremonial occasions and performed

antiphonal singing. According to another, the *quan họ* singing originates from Viêm Xá village, whose residents invited young men from the village of Hoài Bão to sing with girls of Viêm Xá during festivities and celebrations (Đặng Vãng Lung 1978:160).

Apart from the legends that focus on the geographical aspect, there are some that centre on explaining the meaning of the name of this genre. Some of these legends say that *quan họ* is a later name of a similar genre - *hát đúm*. One version has it that under the Trịnh lords (*chúa Trịnh*, 1545–1787) people performed *tuồng* and *chèo* (*hát tuồng* – the Vietnamese variety of Chinese opera, *hát chèo* – popular theatre) at weddings and other celebrations, but later they understood that the form and content of these genres did not answer their purposes and began to sing folk love songs at weddings. Since a wedding is an affair of two families, the new genre was called *hát quan họ*, where *quan* means “nobility” and *họ* means “family”, so together it could mean “two noble families” (Đặng Vãng Lung 1978:161).

Another type of legend, also connecting the origins of *hát quan họ* with the period of the Trịnh lords, tells that one of the lords fell in love with a peasant girl, who was singing in the forest while gathering wood. He married her and this marriage gave a name to the new genre – *quan họ*, where *quan* means “an official” and *họ* is an interjection used to stop (a horse), so it is interpreted as “the singing, which stopped the official”. There are also some legends that carry up the origins of the *quan họ* singing to the period of Lý (1009-1225). One of them is a story about Emperor Lý Công Uẩn (ruled 1009-1028), the founder of the Lý dynasty, who escaped from his enemies through the Bắc Ninh province. At that time the inhabitants of Bắc Ninh were singing the *hát đúm* songs, and while the persecutors were listening, the emperor successfully eluded the pursuit. After this incident appeared the name “*quan họ*” (*Một số vấn đề về dân ca quan họ* 1972:87).

However, Vietnamese researcher Vũ Ngọc Phan thinks that the legends interpreting the meaning of *họ* as an interjection used to stop somebody are mistaken, because this interjection can not be used towards people (*Một số vấn đề về dân ca quan họ* 1972:87).

We can make several conclusions from this diversity of legends about the *quan họ* singing origins.

First, the legends vary in defining the period when the *quan họ* singing appeared. Secondly, some of the legends tell that *hát quan họ* is a new name of a similar genre – that of *hát đúm* – which appeared after a certain event (the emperor's escape or the marriage of a lord). Yet they provide no information about the musical or poetical differences between *hát đúm* and the

new genre. Thirdly, it is quite remarkable that the meaning of the name of the genre is interpreted in a number of ways.

As Vietnamese folklorists note, the music of *hát quan họ* does not have any sharp distinctions from the music of other genres of alternating singing. The main difference is in the degree of skill. *Hát quan họ* is considered to be the peak example of Vietnamese performing arts (Trần Linh Quý, Hồng Thao 1997:170). An opinion about songs *quan họ* that is expressed by the Vietnamese folklorists is consonant with concept of “polishing”, i.e. an idea that the variation of folklore text while performing is a process of its' improvement (intuitive or intentional). This concept was very popular in 1930's of in the Soviet Union [Chistov 2005:79]. Vietnamese researchers often note that as long as *hát quan họ* is the most ancient genre of call-and-response songs, texts and tunes of *quan họ* are the most “polished” and perfect. Folklorist Lê Thị Nhâm Tuyết notes that at the beginning of the 20th century songs and performances of *hát quan họ* were very diversified and complicated, while others genres of call-and-response songs (*thường rang*, *bộ mạng* (genres of Mường ethnic group), *lượn* (genre of Tày ethnic group), *hạn khuông* (Thái ethnic group), *xoan*, *gheo*, *ví*, *đúm*, *trống quân* and others) did not achieve this stage of development [*Một số vấn đề về dân ca quan họ* 1972:79].

3. *Hát trống quân*

Trống quân singing is another popular genre of call-and-response songs. The name of the genre means “singing to the accompaniment of a military drum” (*trống* means ‘drum’, *quân* means ‘military’).

Like *hát quan họ*, *trống quân* singing is done in the form of antiphonal sentimental dialogues between young men and women. The rhythm of singing is accented by a drum, which gave the name to the genre. Singing to a drum is typical of northern Vietnam; Vietnamese researcher Phan Ke Binh assumes that this genre became popular at the beginning of the 18th century (Dementieva-Leskinen 1993:92). *Trống quân* is concerned with the ceremonies of the eighth month, in particular, of the Mid-autumn festival.

There are some hypotheses on the origins of this genre. One legend attributes *trống quân* to the 13th century war against the Mongolian Yuan dynasty. While resting, soldiers divided into two groups and sang response songs to the accompaniment of a drum. After the victory, this kind of singing spread throughout the northern part of the country. Another legend attributes it to a much later period – the end of the 18th century, associating the genre with Emperor Quang Trung (real name Nguyễn Huệ, ruled 1788-1792). According to the story, during the war with the

Manchurian Qing dynasty, Quang Trung ordered his soldiers to divide into two groups and for one group to act like girls and sing love songs. These performances were supposed to save the soldiers from tiredness. The third legend also refers the origins of the *trống quân* singing to the period of the war against the Qing. In this case the name of the genre is said to have appeared as a result of mispronouncing the melody name *trung quân*, which means “loyalty to monarch”, when Nguyễn Huệ ordered to his army to sing this song during the battles with the Qing troops (Trần Việt Ngữ 2002:18).

Although all the legends tell that the origins of this genre are connected with war, in fact, the war drum is a portable musical instrument, while the instrument typically used for the *trống quân* singing is static.

The idiophone that is typical for the *trống quân* singing is the so-called “ground drum” (*trống đất*). Dumoutier describes this instrument in the following way:

‘A thick iron wire is attached to two bamboo pegs buried in the ground. The wire vibrates over a huge pitcher (also buried in the ground) that serves as a resonator; musicians beat on the wire with drumsticks, and a dull drawling sound resembling that of a skin covered drum is heard.’ (Dumoutier G. 1890:33-4)

This illustration by Dumoutier was made in the late 19th century, and modern Vietnamese researchers also describe idiophones like this. For example, Trần Việt Ngữ says that the “ground drum” is made of a square wood box which acts as resonator and a bamboo rope over it instead of wire (Trần Việt Ngữ 2002:28-9). Musical instruments of this kind can be found in the musical traditions of ethnic minorities of Vietnam. The *Muong* people, in particular, have a similar idiophone that they call *clông tạt* (Vũ Lâm).

What else, besides this musical instrument, can distinguish the *trống quân* singing from the other genres of call-and-response songs? Like *quan họ* and *ví*, these songs are usually written in the *lục bát* metre. There are some opinions about the peculiar features of this genre. For example, Vũ Ngọc Phan says that there are additional syllables that are necessary in these songs, particularly the syllable *thời* is repeated after the second syllable in each line, and the syllables *í* and *a* after the forth syllable in each line (Vũ Ngọc Phan 1958 part 2:118). Trần Việt Ngữ writes that the *trống quân* singing is an improvisation with a competitive character and the level of mastery of the singer depends on his or her skill to keep up the song dialogue (Trần Việt Ngữ 2002).

4. *Hát giặm*

Hát giặm (sometimes transliterated as *hát dậm*) is a genre of call-and-response songs typical of the Nghệ Tĩnh province. Vũ Ngọc Phan argues that this genre appeared three or four hundred years ago. The word “*dậm*”, he writes, means ‘to connect, to patch up’, for example *dậm một cái nan vào một cái rổ rách* means ‘to patch a basket up with bamboo twigs’ (Vũ Ngọc Phan 1958 part 2:120). Researcher Nguyễn Đông Chi also thinks that the word ‘*dậm*’ means ‘to connect’ which implies ‘to connect by rhyme’, because the response in a call-and-response song is usually rhymed with the end of the call. Đào Việt Hưng, for his part, offers a hypothesis that ‘*dậm*’ is the name of the repeating line in each verse [Trần Quang Hải].

Nguyễn Đông Chi notes that *hát giặm* tunes are simple and plain, because this genre is very old, while the tunes of later genres are more melodious and harmonious. The scholar also maintains that while other genres have only one function – for example, religious singing (*hát dậm, hát cửa đình, hát xoan*), love songs (*hát trống quân, hát phường vải, hát duyên nghĩa*) or narrative songs (*hát xẩm, nói thơ* – poetry declamation), *hát giặm* can have all of the above. Although nowadays nobody sings *hát giặm* songs during religious ceremonies, Nguyễn Đông Chi states that some features of the performing technique indicate their belonging to the religious sphere (Nguyễn Đông Chi 1963 16-7).

Nearly all *hát giặm* songs are written in a five-syllable metre with rhyme at the end of each line, with two repeating lines at the end of each verse (Vũ Ngọc Phan 1958:120). Vũ Ngọc Phan also notices that some *giặm* songs were written by Confucianists and then became popular. There are Sino-Vietnamese words and citations from Chinese historical books in the songs written by Confucianists (Vũ Ngọc Phan 1958:121). Nguyễn Đông Chi, on the contrary, writes that Confucianists and men of letters avoided *hát giặm*, because they considered this genre too simplistic. Educated people preferred the genres based on *lục bát* and *song thất lục bát* metres (Nguyễn Đông Chi 1963:107-8).

Sometimes, any poem written in the five-syllable metre is called *hát giặm*. Due to this fact the singing genre of *vè* is often regarded as *hát giặm*, although *vè* are not call-and-response songs, but narrative songs with a plot (Nikulín 1977:228). Most scholars divide *vè* in two groups: historical *vè* (*vè lịch sử*) and *vè* about everyday life (*vè thế sự*). *Vè* songs are either based on legends, that is why their characters often have magical features (Ca dao, Dân ca, Tục ngữ, *Vè* 1977:119), or written as a response to some events and consequently are naïve and inartificial as compared to *ca dao*, for example (Nguyễn Đông Chi 1963:61).

Due to the lack of sources, researchers cannot say exactly when the *vè* singing came to be, but they are sure that it was no later than in the 18th century.

Vè songs can be written not only in the five-syllable metre, but also in *lục bát*, *song thật lục bát* and others (Nguyễn Đông Chi 1963:70).

5. *Hát ví*

Hát ví is the most common genre of call-and-response songs in the province of Nghệ Tĩnh, but it can also be heard with in some northern provinces. *Ví* songs are always written in the *lục bát* and *song thật lục bát* metres. One opinion holds that this genre was preferred by Confucianists who composed songs in it (Nguyễn Chung Anh 1958:22), another point of view states that this genre is entirely folk and never uses Sino-Vietnamese words.

Nguyễn Đông Chi argues that in the province of Nghệ Tĩnh *hát ví* vanished after the August Revolution of 1945, and what we can hear now is a mere reconstruction of the lost tradition (Nguyễn Chung Anh 1958:10), however another view holds that *hát ví* has enjoyed an unbroken history that stretches back for three centuries (Đào Việt Hưng 1999:98).

Ví singing exists in a variety of forms, with some of them sung solo, so the only permanent characteristic is the use of the *lục bát* and *song thật lục bát* metres. Some of the *hát ví* forms are connected with different professions, such as *hát phường vải* – songs of spinners, *hát chặt củi* – songs of people collecting brushwood, *hát đò đưa* – songs of boatmen, *ví phường buôn* – songs of traders, *ví phường cấy* – songs of people transplanting rice seedlings, and many others. *Phường* in these cases means collective work or guild (Đào Việt Hưng:1999). It is important, as Nguyen Trung Anh writes, that not all of these songs were sung while working. Whereas people did sing *hát chặt củi* while collecting brushwood, they sang *ví phường cấy* during the appropriate season but while resting (Nguyễn Chung Anh 1958:65-72).

The most famous form of the *ví* singing is *hát phường vải*, the songs of spinners. As Ninh Việt Giao notes, *hát phường vải* originally was a genre of labour songs that girl-spinners sang while working (Ninh Việt Giao 2011:21). These songs are traditionally performed from the ninth month, when the cotton crop is picked, until the first month (Ninh Việt Giao 2011:87).

Poet Nguyễn Du is believed to have often taken part in singing *phường vải* songs; it is furthermore reported that many educated people enjoyed participating in singing *phường vải*. There was a special role for “erudite persons” – to prompt singers how to improvise. Such a

person was called *thầy gà*, where *thầy* means “teacher” and “gà” is to prompt (Ninh Việt Giao 2011:34).

6. *Hát ca trù*

Sometimes, together with the above-mentioned folk song genres Vietnamese scholars name the genre called *hát ca trù*. For example, Hoàng Kiều considers *hát ca trù* to be a genre of folk music like *quan họ* singing, *ghẹo* singing or *xoan* singing (Hoàng Kiều 2001:519). Hà Văn Cầu writes that *hát quan họ*, *hát xoan*, *hát giặm* and *hát ca trù* have many common features, because all of them are performed as song dialogues between male and female singers, and all of them were sung during rustic ceremonials and festivals (Hà Văn Cầu 2005:208).

Yet meanwhile there is a cardinal difference between the *ca trù* singing and the genres of call-and-response songs. The *ca trù* singing, also known as *hát ả đào* or *hát nói*, is a genre of singing accompanied by three musical instruments: *đàn đáy* – a lute with a long neck, *phách* – a small percussion instrument, a plank of bamboo that is beaten with wooden sticks, and *trống chầu* – a drum. *Ca trù* is performed only by female singers, and instead of folk poetry classical Vietnamese and Chinese poems are used as lyrics. *Ca trù* is therefore not a genre of folk song, but a kind of chamber music. In 2009 *ca trù* was recognized by the UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage, and at present the Vietnamese are putting a lot of effort into its reconstruction and preservation, because after the August Revolution of 1945 it was prohibited as indecent. But as Vietnamese researchers say, *ca trù* was only one of the forms of chamber music, and court music (*hát cung đình*) and religious singing (*hát thờ*) also belong to this genre (Nguyễn Xuân Diện (2000). It is noteworthy that these researchers unite these different forms of musical activity – religious, court, chamber and folk - in one genre. In fact, it demonstrates that there is no fundamental difference between classical elitist art, that without any doubt felt Chinese influence, and popular art, that is considered to be autochthonic.

There are more genres of call-and-response songs that are not viewed in this paper. One is *hát ghẹo* in the Phú Thọ province, another – *hát đúm* in Hải Phòng. These along with other genres of call-and-response songs that have not been mentioned are performed as theatrical presentations, usually of three principal parts – mutual greeting, main part and farewell. Sometimes there are a man and a woman who play the leading roles and form the centre of the song dialogue while others either just listen or join in a song. There usually are lead singers in the *phường vải* singing, while in the *quan họ* singing everyone sings together in a choir. Some

of call-and-response songs, such as *trống quân*, are related to festivals and celebrations, others, like the *ví* singing, - to labour calendar and work.

Genre of call-and-response song that goes back to rites connected with the cult of fertility, became extremely popular in Vietnam. The genre of call-and-response song exists in a variety of forms. While the shape of the genres changes in the course of time, the only feature that remains invariable is the geographical location. Thus any song in the *lục bát* and *song thật lục bát* metre from the Nghệ Tĩnh province, even a solo song of a boatman, can be called a *ví* song. Sometimes even work songs *hò* are performed like call-and-response songs, for example, *hò giã gạo* (song that is performed while hulling rice). Unfortunately, due to the fact that folklore studies in Vietnam began late, it is impossible to determine the period, when certain traditions appeared. Call-and-response songs stir great interest in researchers, but traditional lore studies in the present conditions are getting more and more difficult, because traditions are dying away, despite measures for their preservation.

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