

Meet Vân-Ánh!

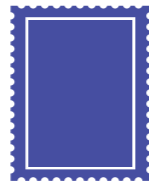


Thân ái chào các em (Hello dear Musical Explorers),

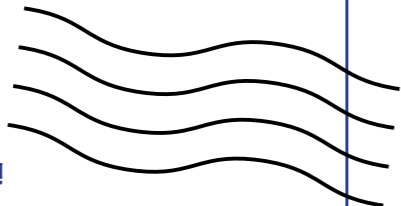
My name is Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ. I am a composer and traditional Vietnamese music master. I was born and grew up in the Artists Quarter in Hanoi, Vietnam. Every day, I listened to all kinds of music that artists practiced as early as 5:30 AM in the morning! Music such as Vietnamese traditional music, rock, and classical, and the dedication from artists became my inspiration for my musical career. The traditional music that my masters shared and taught me was a time machine that allowed me to go back in history to learn about our rich national Vietnamese heritage.

I can't wait to share with you all the wisdom, traditions, and customs that live behind these songs!

Vân-Ánh



Musical Explorers
c/o Carnegie Hall
881 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019



Photos: childhood photo courtesy of artist; publicity photo by Tung Nguyen. Old Quarter, Hanoi (night) by Douglas Peebles Photography / Alamy Stock Photo; Banh Mi 25 by dbtravel / Alamy Stock Photo.



We asked Vân-Ánh ...

What musical instruments did you learn first?

The đàn Tranh (zither) was my first instrument. Growing up, anytime you were an outstanding student in school or won an award, you got to add a new instrument as a reward. By the time I was 18 years old, I played more than six instruments! Those instruments include the đàn Bầu (monochord), đàn T'rung (vertical bamboo xylophone), đàn K'longput (clapping tubes), trống (drum), đàn Tam Thập Lục (hammer dulcimer), and đàn Tứ (four-string lute). I have been practicing, teaching, and performing all seven instruments ever since!

What was your favorite children's game?

My favorite Vietnamese game growing up was Chơi Chuyền (bamboo jacks)! You play this game

by tossing a ball up in the air and picking up as many sticks as possible. As a child, I dreamed of always owning a tennis ball, because in Vietnam, we used round eggplants or tomatoes that we found on farms as our ball when we played this game. It gets very messy.

What are some signature foods from Vietnam?

Vietnam has many distinct types of street food dishes that are sold and served at different hours of the day and your choices often depend on the weather! If the day is cold, we eat hot noodle soups like phở (chicken or beef noodle soup) or bánh cuốn (a rice cake with pork). If the day is hot, we eat bánh mì (sandwich) or nem cuốn (fresh spring rolls).