

Letter dated 29.11.2005

Dear Miss Bancaud,

Here are some notes on the Phu Xuan ensemble you can look up the presentation made by the Maison des Cultures du Monde for more information.

As for the music for films, I'm not sure how to go about speaking of it.

The relationship with the film-makers, the work itself and so on, all these elements vary from one film to another, one film-maker to the other (I have worked with three film-makers, TRAN ANH Hung, NGUYEN VO Nghiem-Minh et Guy MOSHE for the film Holly). We spoke about scenarios and about the sequences where music should figure... but all three of the film-makers gave me complete freedom in my compositions, there was not set rule. Everything else has little importance.

In the spring of 1992, TRAN ANH Hung came to see me at Jobert Editions to express his desire to have my participation in his film « The Scent of the Green Pawpaw ». This happened in the same way with NGUYEN VO Nghiem-Minh. With Guy MOSHE it was different. At the beginning I didn't feel like responding but once I had read the script I thought that it was my duty to accomplish this work. The film « Holly » deals with paedophilia in South-East Asia.

I haven't written many scores for films, but this work was a great help with music for theater, and I've often said that I write film music as if it were for opera. I hope that you can make use of these details for your book.

Yours gratefully.

The PHU XUAN ensemble

The PHU XUAN ensemble - courtly music and light music in Hué - made a come-back in 1993. It comprises 14 musicians and one female singer. The musicians were selected from the court ensemble in the town of Hué and placed under the direction of maestros TRAN KICH and NGUYEN Kê (now deceased).

It's a private ensemble the purpose of which is to safeguard the authenticity of traditional Vietnamese music and the concert music of Hué -the Ca Hué (the song of Hué).

Court music in Vietnam has been present for a long time. During the reign of the Emperor MINH MANG (1820-1840) it was modified, codified. Up to the end of the monarchy (1945) this form of music accompanied all the royal ceremonies.

The type of court music that we'd like to preserve is that of the NGUYEN dynasty (1802-1945) since we are not familiar with the forms of music dating from earlier times. This is why we continue the teaching of ensembles specializing in such music :

- Dai nhac - great music

- Tiêu nhac - shorter pieces of music

The PHU XUAN ensemble isn't wide-spread. At the beginning it was sponsored by CODEV-VietPhap (EDF). Nowadays it's the France-Vietnam Association for Music which supports it financially from time to time.

Doctor TRAN Kich taught at the National School of Music in Hué. His son TRAN Thao teaches at the academy.

The PHU-XUAN ensemble has performed in France and Europe in 1995, 1998, 1999 and 2002.