

Viral Ports, Virtual Currents: Interconnections between Media, the Arts and the Everyday in Southeast Asia and its Diasporas,

a Focused Research Group for the Center for Ideas and Society

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Southeast Asia: Text, Ritual & Performance (SEATRiP)

presents

Preservation through Individual (and Guided) Innovation: Toward a Theory of the Charismatic Musician of Vietnamese Traditional Music

a paper presentation by

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In contemporary Vietnam—a country characterized by the persistence of Vietnamese state-nationalism, the emergence of overseas Vietnamese transnationalism, and the increasing presence of global models of culture production—charismatic musicians propel traditional music performance primarily through their ability to amass followers. I focus specifically upon the performance and pedagogical practices of Nguyễn Vĩnh Bảo, a master musician of *nhạc tài tử Nam bộ* [the music of talented amateurs] based in Hồ Chí Minh City. I borrow from both Max Weber's descriptions of charismatic authority and contemporary theoretical work on the nature of charismatic leadership to suggest that he does not cater to the predetermined needs of followers but specifies new dangers threatening the survival of a community or scene of traditional music performance and offers innovative solutions to overcome these dangers.

— photo courtesy of Alexander Cannon

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