

# KHAC CHI

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### Studying Asia

Cabarrus Arts Council sponsors Vietnamese music performance

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KANNAPOLIS — Since seventh-graders can't travel to Vietnam, Vietnam traveled to them this week.

This week, more than 2,000 students in Cabarrus County will attend the musical performance *Khac Chi - Sounds of Vietnam*, performed by Chi Khac, Ho and Bic Hoang. Both have an extensive background in music and have been studying music since the age of 8. They both now teach at the University of British Columbia.

"Through performing we are able to exchange our culture," said Bic of the importance of their work. "And through songs and music, these students are able to learn about the Vietnamese culture, to better understand and respect it."

The performance, sponsored by the Cabarrus Arts Council, is meant to enhance the

seventh-graders study of Asia. At one of 10 performances

Wednesday morning at Northwest Cabarrus Middle School, students were very interested in the bamboo instruments, made by the mountain people of Vietnam, that the couple used in their presentation.

"I love it — they make their own instruments," said Matthew Young.

"When we want something, we just go buy it."

The performers said little but did most of the talking through their instruments, which they allowed some of the students to come down front and experiment with.

During the performance, the husband and wife duo used more than a dozen of the bamboo instruments, often playing several at once.

Between songs and dances, Bic explained the context for the music to the students, who responded by mimicking

the sounds and actions of the performers.

Bic explained that the songs and stories the couple performs are related to roots of some of the 50 minority groups that populate Vietnam.

Chi and Bic said they honor their music by performing mostly on the instruments that are indigenous to Vietnam.

"I liked the performance," said student Bilal Lindsey, "but I like music." •

Khac Chi tours regularly in the United States, Europe and Canada, where they have lived since 1992.

Chi, an award-winning composer in Vietnam, is considered to be an expert on the *dan bau*, a one-string zither.

He was a professor at the Vietnam Conservatory of Music, the conductor of the conservatory's traditional instrument orchestra and the leader of several touring ensembles, one of which evolved into *Khac Chi*.

Bic is credited as being the first woman ever to

play the *koni*, a two-string stick fiddle where silk threads are attached to a disc that is held in the mouth so that the mouth serves as the resonating chamber for the instrument.

As the performance ended and students headed back to class, "cool" seemed to be the word.

"It sounded cool," said Josh Chew. "They are cool."

"Their culture is obviously very different from ours," said Ryan Rutherford, "but still cool."



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