

The

KHAC CHI

Ensemble

The Northern Alberta International Children's Festival
June 1 to 5, 1999 St. Albert, Alberta

The
Edmonton **Journal**

Thursday, June 3, 1999 (excerpted)

The kids can teach you plenty

The round dance is only one example

Liz Nicholls
Journal Theatre Writer
Edmonton

...By the end of their show, the Khac Chi Ensemble, a trio of engaging Vietnamese musical virtuosos now based in Vancouver, has assembled an entire orchestra of eager participants. They play, or at least whale away on, a fascinating range of exotic ancient instruments, accompanied by the three Vietnamese musicians and the rest of us, who have learned to make our mouths into wind chambers.

You'll discover a whole treasure trove of rare instruments as the Khac Chi Ensemble conjures the sounds of Vietnam with bamboo xylophones, wooden pipes and flutes, tubular drums tuned and played with flat paddles, shimmering racks of shells – and voices, too. Khac Chi himself is Vietnam's premier player of the Dan Bau, a one-stringed zither so difficult it should make dobro players everywhere feel like they're just mailing in their stuff. The sound, as this charming man explains, has an eerie resemblance to the human voice, with a startlingly resonant lower range and hauntingly penetrating soprano.

Ngoc Bich, his wife, is the first woman to play the Dan Ko Ni, a two-string violin attached by silk thread to a membrane she places in her mouth. This is the resonating chamber; and I guarantee you'll never have heard anything like the quivering sound which resembles a human cry. At other times Ngoc Bich, exquisitely dressed in a multi-coloured satin costume, plays a sort of double-sided xylophone that hangs like a suspension bridge. Sometimes she just claps in front of open ended bamboo pipes and they make a sound – true magic and nothing whatever to do with the K-Tel clapper light. At the performance I caught, kids, from the tiniest on up, loved the grace and good humour of the trio, and were endlessly curious about the music too.

The St. Albert Gazette
Saturday, May 15th, 1999
(excerpted)

It's about time for festival fun

International Children's Festival plays with time, as it welcomes entertainers from around the world

By Craig Elliott
Staff Writer

Khac Chi Ensemble

... Though the instruments and music that the Khac Chi Ensemble play look and sound like they come from another planet, they are actually the native instruments of the mountain people of Vietnam and some of them are over 2,000 year old.

The exotic ensemble's members – Khac Chi, Ngoc Bich and Hung Nguyen – like to educate their audiences about the eerie, haunting sounds of their homeland, but also enjoy demonstrating how they can function with classical music and even the popular music and instruments of their adopted home, Canada.

The ensemble plays for children often at festivals and in schools and musician Ngoc Bich says these are some of their most enjoyable performances.

"We really enjoy performing for children," she said.

"They ask us many different and interesting questions. Some are very funny." Children seem more open to the oddly-shaped instruments and their mysterious sounds. "Many times, they play with us by playing on their bodies."



July 5, 1999

Dear Bic Hoang,

Just a quick note to thank you and the rest of the ensemble for your cooperation and media support during the Northern Alberta International Children's Festival. It was wonderful to have your fabulous show at the Festival and we're thrilled at the audience's response to it.

As promised, here are all the media clippings from the Festival.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (780) 459-1515. I look forward to working with you again sometime!

Sincerely,

Larissa Banting
Marketing & Public Relations

P.S. Thank you for your kind note.

Edmonton Woman Magazine May/June 99
(excerpted)

It's about time for the children's festival

... One of the mainstage highlights is the Khac Chi Ensemble, a trio of talented Vietnamese musicians who now call Vancouver home.

The 4,000-year-old tradition of Vietnamese folk music features an exotic array of instruments, including the Dan K'longput, a set of bamboo pipes which are played by clapping in front of the open end. Even more unusual is the Dan Ko Ni, a two-string violin that uses the player's mouth as a resonating chamber!

It's a fascinating glimpse into a beautiful musical tradition from the Far East and the Khac Chi Ensemble infuses each performance with both humour and phenomenal musicianship.