



Standing Rock Cultural Arts' "Around the World" Music Series presents ~~~Buddhist Music of Vietnam~~~

越南佛教音樂會

In this special program, world-renowned ethnomusicologist, musician, and NEA National Heritage Fellow Dr. Phong Nguyen will share his knowledge of the Buddhist musical traditions of Vietnam, demonstrating numerous distinct styles of recitation, cantillation, hymn singing, and chant while accompanying himself with a variety of traditional percussion and string instruments. Translations and insights into the texts will be provided.



About the performer:

Born in 1946 into a family of traditional musicians in the Mekong Delta of southern Vietnam, Phong Nguyen (full Vietnamese name: Nguyen Thuyet Phong) showed early musical talent, and, at the age of seven, his fine singing voice attracted the attention of the

Elder Venerable (Hòa thượng) Thích Thiên Đạo, the abbot of Thích Phước Monastery and the senior Buddhist monk of the entire Mekong Delta region, who happened to be visiting Phong's home village of Tam Ngai. The abbot offered Phong the opportunity to become a novice at Thích Phước Monastery in Can Tho Province (located a half day's journey by boat from Tam Ngai), where he could obtain training in Buddhist chanting, and he and his family accepted.

For the next ten years, Phong received a thorough religious (and musical) education from the monks at the temple, while at the same time pursuing academic studies at the local public school. After seven years, he was ordained as a Reverend Bikkhu (called Dai duc in Vietnamese), then finally

returned to the temple as a Venerable Bikkhu Th??ng t'a (senior Buddhist monk) before becoming the principal of a high school in Saigon.

In 1974 he received a bachelor's degree in philosophy and Vietnamese literature (specializing on that related to Buddhism) from Saigon University, before leaving Vietnam to pursue postgraduate research in Japan (on the subject of Japanese Buddhist chant), under the sponsorship of the Ministries of Education of Vietnam and Japan.

In 1982, Phong completed a 466-page Ph.D. dissertation, entitled "La musique bouddhique du Vietnam" (The Buddhist Music of Vietnam), at the Sorbonne University in Paris, which was the first and most comprehensive work published on the subject of Vietnamese Buddhist chant. His dissertation was given the rare distinction of Mention « Trè s honorable » (highest honors/summa cum laude).

Dr. Phong is today one of the world's foremost authorities on the subject of Vietnamese music. He has taught at the University of Washington, UCLA, Kent State University, the University of Michigan, and Mahasarakham University, and, in 2004-2005, helped to establish the ethnomusicology program at the Vietnam National Academy of Music (formerly called the Hanoi Conservatory of Music), the preem-

inent classical and traditional music teaching institution in Vietnam. He has contributed articles to such standard reference works as The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, and an encyclopedia of world music published by the Iwanami Shoten publishing house in Tokyo, Japan. In 1997, in a White House ceremony, he was awarded the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, the U.S.'s highest honor in the folk and traditional arts.

Dr. Phong has performed all across the United States, as well as in Canada, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Vietnam. With his Phong Nguyen Ensemble, Phong has performed at such venues as the Cleveland Museum of Art, National Folk Festival, Kennedy Center, and Library of Congress. He has released CDs on the Lyricord, Music of the World, and White Cliffs Media labels. He has also received grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Asian Cultural Council, and Henry Luce Foundation.

For the past three years, Dr. Phong's field re-

search has focused on Buddhist musical traditions of Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, and the Himalayas, toward a future publication entitled "Buddhist Music: A Global Perspective." Over the past decade, he has also researched the musics of Thailand's minority ethnic groups, as well as participated in an ongoing interdisciplinary project called "Song of the Mekong" since 2016.

The North Water Street Gallery is conveniently located just a block north of the intersection of Main and Water Streets in Kent, Ohio, with free street parking on both sides of the street. Seating is limited, so arrive early for the best seats.

Established in 2015, the "Around the World" Music Series is a concert series presenting outstanding musicians from diverse cultures in an intimate setting.

Concerts are held approximately every other month in the new theater space of the North Water Street Gallery in downtown Kent, Ohio.

The series is an initiative of Standing Rock Cultural Arts, and is curated by ethnomusicologist David Badagnani. The series is made possible by the support of Drs. Terry E. and Sara Stone Miller and the Ohio Arts Council.

featuring Dr. Phong Nguyen
8:00 p.m., Saturday, March 14, 2020
North Water Street Gallery
300 N. Water Street, Suite H
Kent, Ohio
\$10 suggested donation (or pay what you can)
preceded by 7:30 p.m.
meet-and-greet featuring light food and drinks