

WORLD PREMIERE

THE **VÂN-ÁNH VÕ**
Odyssey
FROM VIETNAM TO AMERICA



JAN 22-23, 2016, 8 PM • YBCA FORUM

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS • YBCA.ORG



WELCOME TO YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Our organization was founded in 1993 as a citizen institution that would be home to the diverse local arts community while serving to connect the Bay Area to the world. YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. We believe that culture – the collection of art, traditions, values, human experiences, and stories – is what enables us to act with imagination and creativity, to act socially, politically, and with conviction. Culture instigates change in the world.

We believe that more and different kinds of people need to be defining culture today and that more people need to have access to cultural experiences that are relevant to their lives and their communities. We need new definitions and new experiences that bring people together regardless of their differences in order to make the inclusive and equitable culture we need today. We believe that the arts should be on the front line of change and that cultural institutions exist to spur and support big societal movements.

Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, we are committed to kindling inclusive culture that cultivates empathy, awakens personal and societal transformation, and reaches for a world fueled by inspiration. The need has never been stronger than now; and there is no better place than YBCA to answer the call.

We are so glad that you are here, we are grateful for your cultural participation, and we hope you will come back and enjoy all that YBCA has to offer.

Warmly,

Deborah Cullinan
CEO OF YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS



WORLD PREMIERE

VÂN-ÁNH VÕ AND THE VA'V

THE ODYSSEY

FROM VIETNAM TO AMERICA

The VA'V

ALEX KELLY *Cello, Vocal*

DAN CANTRELL *Accordion, Piano, Vocal*

JIMI NAKAGAWA *Percussions, Taiko drums*

VÂN-ÁNH VÕ *dàn Tranh, đàn Bầu, đàn T'rưng, Vocal*

Guest Artists

IAN WINTERS *Film, Images, Visual Design*

PHILIP BLACKBURN *Electronic Environment*

“Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.”

– THÍCH NHẤT HẠNH, *Peace is Every Step*

Deep gratitude for the contribution of the Vietnamese Boat People and the Vietnamese refugees who have shared their life stories.

PROGRAM

THE ODYSSEY – FROM VIETNAM TO AMERICA

MUSIC & CONCEPT BY **VÂN-ÁNH VÕ**

- I. **LEAVING:** Flashback - War - Leaving - Pirate
- II. **SCORCHING SUN:** Scorching Sun - Lullaby - Thirst
- III. **NƯỚC – MY COUNTRY:** Sea of Tears - Nước – My Country
- IV. **LIGHT OF HOPE:** Awakening - Light of Hope
- V. **BEYOND THE SEAS:** The Americana - How About Us

INTERMISSION

Đất Nước Lời Ru - Lullaby for a Country
COMPOSED BY VÂN-ÁNH VÕ

Hành Vân - Vietnamese Folk Song
ARRANGED BY VÂN-ÁNH VÕ

Lưu Thủy Trường – Green River Delta, Vietnamese Folk Song
ARRANGED BY JACOB GARCHIK AND VÂN-ÁNH VÕ

The Cycle* WORLD PREMIERE
COMPOSED BY MATTHEW J. FOUNTAIN

Summertime+
COMPOSED BY GEORGE GERSHWIN, ARRANGED BY NGUYỄN LÊ

Day Dream* WORLD PREMIERE
COMPOSED BY OSAM EZZELDIN

Go Hunting
COMPOSED BY VÂN-ÁNH VÕ

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

*Written for The VA'V
+ Arranged for The VA'V

COVER ILLUSTRATION/
PROGRAM DESIGN
BY JOHN MAVROUDIS



CHRISTINE JADE



The Odyssey – from Vietnam to America is commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

This project was made possible in part by a grant from The Creative Work Fund, a program of the Walter and Elise Haas Fund also supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Nước – My Country movement was commissioned by the Lâm Family. It is dedicated to Tony Quang Lâm and Mậu Hợp Lâm for their lifelong work in support of the Vietnamese American community, Little Saigon, and the plight of refugees.

Light of Hope and *Beyond the Seas* movements were commissioned by Đỗ & Phạm Family in dedication to the resilience of the Vietnamese spirit and the future of our children.

A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

Vân Ánh Võ's *The Odyssey: From Vietnam to America* is a testament to the suffering and triumphs of the courageous refugees who fled the bloodshed of war and their ravaged lands by boat to sail to freedom. Võ gives voice to the survivors in remembrance of the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, where approximately 400,000 civilians died, and between 1 and 3 million military died on all sides. The Vietnam War left an indelible wound in Vietnam and the United States that still has not been fully healed. Võ has gone through extraordinary efforts to create with this piece a sacred space for all who lived through this horrific time, particularly the Boat People survivors, Vietnam veterans, and more recent refugees who continue to flee their lands by boat. Vietnamese Boat People stories resonate and are so timely with the current horrific situation in Syria, as well as with so many other war-torn countries around the world, where fleeing by water is the only option for survival.

This powerful musical journey you're about to witness is profoundly moving. Through Võ's extraordinary gifted musical mastery, research, field recordings, and interviews with Boat People, she has created an epic and gorgeous composition that draws communities together in a spirit of contemplation, hope, and a commitment to healthy healing and peaceful co-existence.

Thank you for your presence, and enjoy the performance!

ISABEL YRIGOYEN

MUSIC CURATOR

ABOUT VÂN-ÁNH VÕ

VÂN-ÁNH VÕ (b. 1975)

Vân-Ánh Võ is an internationally renowned performer of Vietnamese traditional instruments and a rapidly emerging composer. She dedicates her life to creating music by blending the wonderfully unique sounds of Vietnamese instruments with other music genres, and fusing deeply rooted Vietnamese musical traditions with fresh new structures and compositions.

In 1995, Võ won the championship title in the Vietnamese National Đàn Tranh (Zither) Competition. Since settling in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2001, Võ has focused on collaborating with musicians across different musical genres to create new works, bringing Vietnamese traditional music to a wider audience and preserving her cultural legacy through teaching. In 2002, Võ released her first CD, *Twelve Months, Four Seasons*. In 2009, she released *She's Not She* with award-winning composer Bảo Đố. In 2013, she released her third CD, *Three-Mountain Pass*, with the Kronos Quartet as her guest artist. This work brought positive reviews and high praises by NPR, BBC's *The World*, the *LA Times*, and others.

Võ has acted as a collaborator and guest soloist with Kronos Quartet, Yo-Yo Ma, Southwest Chamber Music, Oakland East Bay Symphony, and a host of acclaimed jazz, rap, and world music artists. She was co-composer and arranger for *Daughter from Danang* (2002) which was Academy Award nominated and a Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner for Best Documentary. Võ also worked on *Bolinao 52* (2008) which won Emmy® Awards for both the film and soundtrack and *A Village Called Versailles* (2009), winner of multiple Best Documentary and Audience Favorite awards.

She has presented her music at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, NPR, Houston Grand Opera, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, many world music festivals throughout the US, and the London Olympic Games 2012 Music Festival. She has been invited to participate as a screening judge in the world music category for both the 2015 and 2016 Grammy® Awards. In addition to the zither (đàn Tranh), Võ also performs as soloist on the monochord (đàn Bầu), the bamboo xylophone (đàn Trùng), traditional drums (trống), and many other traditional instruments.



NGUYEN NHAT HOANG

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Marking the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, *The Odyssey* explores the personal and spiritual journeys of the Vietnamese boat people. For most boat people, the emotional journey continued on long after the physical ordeal was over. For some, the pain stayed with them for life. For others, they buried the horrifying experience deep within their memory as they forged a new life. But all who survived found freedom and new opportunities. Through hard work, sacrifice, and determination, boat people regained stability, pride, and dignity in their new home.

The Odyssey musically engages this arc of transformation, and situates the boat people's experiences in terms of a larger human struggle for survival in the face of conflict and political upheaval. Today, the world's seas are again filling with boat people who are willing to risk everything to escape despair and upheaval towards places of safety, opportunity, and freedom. *The Odyssey* is intended to convey stories of human transformation that resonate for all, not just Vietnamese refugees. It is further hoped that the work can be extended in future iterations to embrace the parallel experiences of people from other communities.

Vietnamese instruments, electronic sounds, and Western instruments together create the musical vocabulary for *The Odyssey*. Vietnamese folk songs, especially lullabies, are a key compositional element.

ABOUT THE ODYSSEY

I am presenting *The Odyssey* because I want to show the unimaginable suffering, unflagging will to survive, and unwavering determination to succeed of the Vietnamese boat people. I hope to deliver the message of peace, of healing, and of forgiveness. Beyond boat people's experience, I am highlighting the incredible power of our human spirit — the value of freedom and the will to live.

I am not a Boat Person; I was born after the Vietnam War, grew up in Vietnam, and emigrated to America in 2001. I have heard personal stories from all sides— from Americans, Vietnamese Americans, South Vietnamese, and North Vietnamese. The war created a deep division; we all have been traumatized with pain, loss, and separation.

The interviews are the inspiration for the music in *The Odyssey*, and were conducted over many months and included the stories of over 50 boat people from across America, including Houston, New Orleans, Orange County, Reno, San Jose, and Seattle. The music includes field recordings of the sounds and stories to provide listeners a deeper context and appreciation for these stories.

Often at my concerts, members of the audience have come up to me and introduced themselves. It is an honor to hear them thank me for my music and to learn that the music has brought them peace. As a traditional artist – one who believes there are no boundaries in traditional Vietnamese music, I play so that all Vietnamese can unite and proudly say “*This is my country's music – this is my heritage and I am Vietnamese.*”

Incorporating new sounds into music and creating symbols through these sounds is my passion. This production extended my research from audio only, into the realm of video, and uses a broader texture of multimedia elements in the finished work.

I hope you come away from the performance having experienced the odyssey and triumph of the boat people and all the Vietnamese refugees. I hope you are touched by the universal emotions of meeting life's challenges and reflecting upon each of our own personal struggles, sacrifices, and transformation. — *Vân-Ánh Võ*



CHRISTINE JADE

ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS

The Odyssey consists of five movements: *Leaving*, *Scorching Sun*, *Nước – My Country*, *Light of Hope*, and *Beyond the Sea*. The music's inspiration and source are from the stories told by the boat people.

I. LEAVING: Flashback - War - Leaving - Pirate

Flashback tells the boat people's stories from the perspective of the younger generation through the themes of strength and resilience of the human spirit. In retelling their stories, boat people often said they could not think of the next day nor the next hour while at sea; they were only able to think of the next minute. To stay strong, they hummed lullaby songs from their childhood to find comfort during times of perilous uncertainty.

War is inspired by the rhythm of an SOS signal. Back in the rural villages of Vietnam, this rhythm on bronze drums was used to warn people danger was coming. And boat people said war is just like that – it just comes with little warning.

Leaving uses sound from the diesel boat engines, a sound boat people said they can never forget – the sound is the source of both hope and horror. The song starts off with a famous song known amongst boat people, *Thuyền Viễn Xứ*, which has come to symbolize Vietnamese boat people floating on the open sea with no destination. This song is presented on đàn Bầu like a human voice crying for the fate of human beings who have suffered through war.

Pirate has boat engine sounds that are different – they are steady, fast, uncaring, and irreverent sounds, like pirates who do not care about other human beings.

II. SCORCHING SUN: Scorching Sun - Lullaby - Thirst

Scorching Sun is about the fear in stillness and quiet, but it is also a comforting moment for boat people. After being worn out from storms, quiet moments helped boat people to gather their strength to keep the family together for other moments.

Lullaby has one main element – a Southern Vietnamese lullaby. With 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam, the lullabies, although different in dialect, all have the same common themes of providing comfort to children, giving encouragement to the soldier longing for loved ones, and maintaining strength during difficulties. These lullabies were often called upon by the boat people during their odyssey.

Thirst is a song that symbolizes both the physical and spiritual agony of boat people's experiences. Thirst was written after an interview on the atrocities of piracy, theft, torture, and rape. A story emerged that a mother poured diesel gas on her two daughters and had them play dead to prevent the pirates from taking them. The pirates left the daughters alone, but took all the other women on the boat, including the mother. The women were put on an isolated island and the pirates returned at night and raped them. Eventually, the women were rescued by fisherman boats and brought to refugee camps in Thailand. The mother later found that one of her daughters almost died of suffocation from the diesel gas.

III. NƯỚC – MY COUNTRY: Sea of Tears - Nước – My Country

The movement brings in Thích Nhất Hạnh's poem—**Ấm Áp** (*For Warmth*)—to share a message of unity. The music calls for people to hold one another, to stand by each other, to build the community, and to help each other stay strong. In Việt Nam, there is a cultural tradition of reciting poems to share stories and traditions, and to deliver a message. Music from The VA'V merges in with the spoken words to integrate the message—standing by each other makes us stronger, together.

IV. LIGHT OF HOPE: Awakening - Light of Hope

The movement starts with the voice of people singing together in church. Boat people shared that they often go to church or temple to find peace and refuge. They also recalled people on the boat singing and praying in their own faith during their time at sea. The songs in this movement share the message of hope, and how hope helps us to stay alive and find the strength needed to move forward.

V. BEYOND THE SEAS: The Americana - How About Us

Americana is about the life of the boat people and other refugees after resettlement. In a short time, they have rebuilt their lives and created a vibrant community. Vietnamese food has become part of the culinary landscape and many of the people have successfully contributed to the various sectors of American society.

How About Us was inspired by the determination of the Vietnamese refugees to rebuild their lives.

— Vân-Ánh Võ

TEXTS

II. SCORCHING SUN

RU CON NAM BỘ (LULLABY)

Ầu Ơ

Ví dầu cầu ván đóng đinh

Cầu tre lắt léo ơ ầu ơ

gập ghềnh khó đi

Ầu Ơ

Khó đi mẹ dắt con đi

Chứ con thi trường học

Ơ Ầu, mẹ thi trường đời

Ơ ầu ơ ... ơ ầu ơ

III. NƯỚC – MY COUNTRY

"I wrote this poem during the Vietnam War after I heard about bombing of Bến Tre city. The city of 300,000 was destroyed because guerillas fired several rounds of unsuccessful anti-aircraft gunfire and then left. My pain was profound."

— Thích Nhất Hạnh

ẤM ÁP

Tác giả: THÍCH NHẤT HẠNH

Tôi bưng mặt trong lòng
hai bàn tay

Có phải để khóc đau anh

Tôi bưng mặt để giữ

cho ấm áp sự cô đơn

Hai bàn tay che chở

Hai bàn tay nuôi dưỡng

Hai bàn tay ngăn cản

Sự ra đi hờn dỗi
của linh hồn

FOR WARMTH

Author: THÍCH NHẤT HẠNH

I hold my face between
my hands

no I am not crying

I hold my face between my hands

to keep my loneliness warm

Two hands protecting

Two hands nourishing

Two hands to prevent

My soul from leaving
me in anger

BOAT PEOPLE AND THEIR HISTORY

"Some tragedies defy the imagination. Some misery so surpasses the grasp of reason that language itself breaks beneath the strain. Instead, we gasp for metaphors. Instead, we speak the inaudible dialect of the human heart...Let us do something meaningful - something profound - to stem this misery. We face a world problem. Let us fashion a world solution. History will not forgive us if we fail. History will not forget us if we succeed."

— WALTER MONDALE, Vice President of the United States of America, July 21, 1979

On April 30, 1975, 20 months after the last American combat forces were withdrawn from Vietnam, Saigon fell to North Vietnamese armed forces. Vietnam's long civil war had ended. Fearing reprisals, thousands of people fled the country, many with the help of a hastily organized American airlift. Many more Vietnamese who had fought gallantly for the Saigon regime stayed behind.

Postwar conditions were grim. None suffered more than those who were branded as reactionaries and traitors by Southern Vietnam's new regime. First a trickle and then by 1978, a flood of refugees fled Vietnam in small, ill-equipped boats. More than half a million people died at sea. Two million more boat people found temporary sanctuary in camps in China or Southeast Asia.

Reports of the horrendous conditions faced by the refugees shocked world opinion and prompted an international effort coordinated by the United

Nations to improve conditions in camps and support resettlement of the boat people in various sanctuary countries. In the years that followed, several hundred thousand men, women, and children swelled the Vietnamese community in America. Like the 1975 wave of refugees, they were determined to rebuild their lives. Before many years had passed, chiefly through their own tireless efforts and determination, the Vietnamese community in the United States had achieved economic security and a vigorous community cultural life.

The story of America is in large part the story of people who arrived here fleeing from oppression. Today, no less than the immigrant communities that arrived before them, a million and one half Vietnamese Americans enrich all spheres of American life. Many have become prominent in the arts and entertainment, public policy, the armed services, business, education, and technology.

MATTHEW J. FOUNTAIN (b. 1992)

***The Cycle** (2015) WORLD PREMIERE**

Matthew J. Fountain is a composer based in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He completed his Bachelors of Music at Western Michigan University in May 2015, studying under Dr. Richard Adams, Dr. Christopher Biggs, Dr. Lisa Coons, and Professor Curtis Curtis-Smith. Currently, he is working on his Master of Music at Western Michigan University studying again under Dr. Christopher Biggs. His compositions blend electronics and acoustic instruments, to create a listening environment that is dramatic, engaging, and immersive. He is heavily influenced by modern film and pop music, but tends to pull ideas and techniques from earlier time periods as well. In addition to composing, Matt studied Euphonium performance under Dr. Deanna Swoboda for two years during his undergraduate training, and is an advocate and avid performer of new music involving the instrument.

About *The Cycle*, Fountain writes:

“*The Cycle* is a sonic exploration of acoustic instruments, and elements of nature represented in electronics. These elements being air, water, earth, and fire. Much of the inspiration of the piece was drawn from *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, and it occasionally quotes and varies the theme from the show.”

**The Cycle* was commissioned for the VA’V by Vân-Anh Võ.

OSAM EZZELDIN (b. 1977)

***Day Dream** (2015) WORLD PREMIERE**

Pianist and composer Osam Ezzeldin was born in Egypt, raised in America, and is currently residing in California. He embarked on a journey of self-directed jazz study and began a rapid rise to excellence. His versatility makes him an especially valuable addition to a new generation of jazz virtuosos.

His passion for music and jazz brought him to the United States at age 21. His prodigious abilities with the piano and composition/arranging soon brought him to the attention of the professional jazz scene nationally and internationally. At the age of 29, Osam received a full scholarship to attend the Berklee College Of Music with the highest honors from Berklee’s evaluation team and faculty members, including drummer Terri Lyne Carrington and pianist Ray Santisi. He has collaborated on workshop and teaching sessions at UC Berkeley, California Jazz Conservatory, and Berklee College Of Music.

He has shared the stage and studio with some of the leading jazz musicians including: Billy Cobham, Giovanni Hidalgo, Zakir Hussain, Larry Coryell, Dave Weckl, Kai Eckhardt, Orhan Osman’s Turkophony All Stars, Zigaboo Modelist (The Meters), Bernard Wright, George Brooks, Chuck Rainey, Sean “The Rick” Rickman, Abbos Kasimov, and Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez.

About *Day Dream*, Ezzeldin writes:

“The composition was written in D Minor built on 9-beats time signature, with melodic lines that extend “over the bar” style, with an (Intro/Head/Bridge) during the end of the Head and Bridge harmony changes to other modes (Scales) with the same Tonic, which is called “Modal Interchange.” With a sweet conversation between the cello, đàn Tranh (zither), đàn T’rung (bamboo xylophone), and đàn Bầu (monochord), piano and rhythms transform the mind and soul into a day dreaming mood.”

**Day Dream* was commissioned for the Va’V by Vân-Anh Võ.

ALEX KELLY



ALEX KELLY (Cello, Vocal) is a San Francisco based cellist, composer, and electronic musician. He composes and performs with major symphony orchestras, chamber orchestras, new music ensembles, string quartets, cello quartets, big bands, jazz combos, rock bands, hip-hop crews, klezmer bands, world music ensembles, theater companies, radio productions, ballet companies, modern dance companies, and circus troupes. He also composes film scores and video game music. Alex is the author of the cello technique book *The Seven Points* which teaches fingerboard-mapping techniques. His live-looping solo show has been seen in a variety of venues ranging from Davies Symphony Concert Hall to the Yosemite mountaintops.

About *The Odyssey*, Kelly writes:

“The tragic story of the mass exodus of hundreds-of-thousands of Vietnamese refugees is a story that needs to be retold for two reasons: the story deeply resonates within the families of the boat people and many Americans under 40 years of age are completely unaware of this period in our history. I find that the best way to unlock a story in the hearts of an audience is by telling the story through music. Through the combination of Vietnamese instruments, western instruments, and spoken word, the story will unfold in a way that transcends time and place, and transports one into the needs of now...”

JIMI NAKAGAWA (Percussion, Taiko drums) was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan. He studied taiko with Sensei Seiiichi Tanaka for eight years before coming to the US. From 1999 through 2010, Jimi was a performing member of a professional group

named Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble, which had been to many festivals around the country. Besides touring with various projects, Jimi also leads OH-IN Taiko School in Richmond, CA.

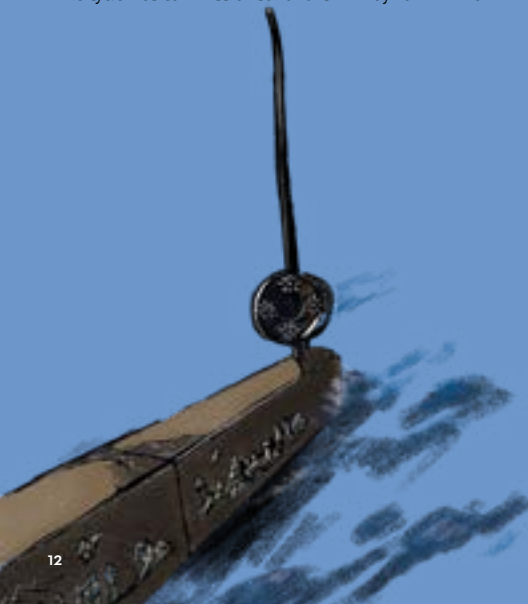
JIMI NAKAGAWA



DAN CANTRELL (Accordion, Piano, Vocal) is an Emmy-winning composer known for his innovative and energetic approach to documentary film and television scoring. He can be heard on albums by Tom Waits, Joanna Newsom, the Toids, Beats Antique, and numerous self-produced albums. He was recently a featured soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, and has performed with the Oakland Symphony, Danny Elfman, Mike Marshall, members of the Klezmatics, Brave Old World, and Fishbone.

Dan composed music for three seasons of *The Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack* on Cartoon Network and received an Emmy Award for his scoring work on the PBS documentary *Home*

DAN CANTRELL



Front. Influenced by the music of Eastern Europe, Early American Jazz, and modern alternative rock, his extensive scoring catalogue for film and television is described as “hauntingly beautiful... quirky and energetic” (*SF Bay Guardian*). Dan’s music spans a wide range of emotion and style, rich with virtuosic performance, lush acoustic orchestrations, sonic textures resonant with sound design, and strikingly innovative melodic themes.

PHILIP BLACKBURN (Guest Artist) is an electronic composer, scholar, and an educator with a background in Vietnamese music.

About *The Odyssey*, Blackburn writes:

“In 1993-1994 I made field recordings throughout Vietnam during my trip on behalf of the American Composers Forum to establish ties between the US and Vietnamese composer organizations. I revisited those recordings to create the soundscape for *The Odyssey*. It is my imagined recreation of the journey of the Boat People in three scenes: from the chaos of war, and hiding out in the jungle, to desperate escape across the waters and to the relief of freedom.

Each of these scenes contain hidden references. For example, the secret signal for the Americans to abandon Saigon in April 1975 was playing Bing Crosby’s “*I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas*” over the radio; an ancient jackfruit tree on the grounds of the US Embassy was chopped down to allow more landing space for Chinook helicopters to ferry families to the carriers; and a lost tape of a Vietnamese language lesson reappears from the rubble, symbolizing one person’s attempt to communicate across boundaries (he’s learning to tell the time). We then disappear to the rural areas to bide our time and inch our way to the coast; on the way we are buoyed by Central Vietnamese lullabies, streams, night birds, temple chants, and distant music of the hill tribes. With high hopes we reach the delta and a small packed boat; our lives dependent on its working diesel engine. If it should stop even for a moment we are easy pickings for the Thai pirates and starvation. We hear seagulls, indicating land is not far off, perhaps the refugee camps of the Philippines or Hong Kong. Our hearts quicken with the rhythm of anticipation as the drums and engine drive us to safety. This time when we hear jet planes overhead they are not here to attack but to fly us to freedom.”

IAN WINTERS (Guest Artist) is a video and still-image artist who is a frequent collaborator with performers and stage productions.

About *The Odyssey*, Winters writes:

“Being part of bringing to life the untold stories that *The Odyssey* is centered on is a uniquely personally resonant project for me. Despite being in a quiet Midwestern family neighborhood, many childhood memories of the 70s and 80s are for me linked with events half a world away. Like many other Americans with a parent whose military career spanned multiple tours in Vietnam and Indochina (and yet came back to the US with a great fondness for the culture in which they spent formative years), the legacy of the war was an everyday background to 70s and 80s. Every now and then those worlds would intersect: visits with my father to the one Vietnamese market in Pittsburgh to buy nước chấm sauce and chilis; geography lessons and digging out first hand photos of the Gulf of Thailand to show what the evening news was about; and visits to the vet center.

The work with *The Odyssey* is a unique chance to bring to life the human stories that were the reasons behind sometimes mystifying memories of young childhood, and brings full circle a long and complex history after a generation has past.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Vân-Ánh Võ wishes to thank the following organization who have supported this project:

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- Viet Bao Daily News
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- Vietnamese Culture and Science Association (VCSA)

PRODUCTION TEAM

- JOSE MARIA FRANCOS, Light Design
- JESSE AUSTIN, Sound Design
- JOSE NAVARRETE, Choreography
- PHỤNG PHẠM, Artistic Assistant
- LINH KOCHAN, Marketing Director
- PAMELA WU, Theater Director
- CATHY LÂM, Producer & Managing Director

SPECIAL THANKS

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— Vân-Ánh Võ

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the entire staff of YBCA, sponsors, supporters, and volunteers for making this project possible.

— The VA’V





Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, located in San Francisco's Yerba Buena cultural district, is one of the nation's leading multidisciplinary contemporary arts centers. With a belief that contemporary art is at the heart of community life, YBCA brings audiences and artists of all backgrounds together to express and experience creativity. The organization is known for nurturing emerging artists at the forefront of their fields and presenting works that blend art forms and explore the events and ideas of our time. As part of its commitment to the San Francisco Bay Area, YBCA supports the local arts community and reflects the region's diversity of people and thought through its arts and public programming.

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WORK IN PROGRESS: INVESTIGATIONS SOUTH OF MARKET

Thru Feb 14

Through a series of rotating residencies that serve as an open studio, this continually evolving exhibition focuses on the South of Market Neighborhood.



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Thru Feb 14

Artists and collectives cleverly subvert contemporary office culture as a means to explore the 21st century post-industrial economy.



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An immersive video installation that explores the mutation of propaganda in the age of social media.



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Thru Apr 3

Blurring the lines between the natural and the environmentally harmful, Cooley interrupts our Terrace Landing with a multi-screen video installation inspired by the mine disaster at the Animas river.