

# Music as a catalyst for a relationship

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Recently I was appealed to many things I hated before. The traditional folk song “ Hoa Trinh nu”, which referred to an anecdote of the popular wildflower, was on the loop of replaying all night. Although soap opera was strictly prohibited during Vietnam war for the Southern origin and sensational lyric, its spirit continued to impress hundreds of children in the post-war era, including my father.

During Doi Moi reforms, the Socialists party relaxed the draconian policy; whereas sentimental rhythms were allowed to distribute widely. The working class valued bolero for its “ self” over commune spirit. Soap opera, or bolero, gradually became an irreplaceable part of my father’s soul.

I used to regard bolero’s tune as rustic and impractical because it evoked secretive love among working people, thereby decreased overall productivity, for example, in a famous love poem named “ Sea wave”, the lyrical character forgot many traditional syntaxes as she was deeply in love.

In fact, my childish agony for old emo music was rooted from deep contradiction with father. My pride for being so modern, so adventurous and adaptable as I acquired things fast was not bigger than his confidence in being the historical witness of our land, and an executive manner that made him a reliable manager. While I enjoyed my ragged legs, burned skin after Quidditch training sessions, he preferred the elegant ao dai. He never praised me for keeping the habit of reading daily international articles and finding beauty in literature. When I elected myself for class debate organizer, he just flattered and remind me constantly of fitting in.

Entering high school, I was totally perplexed by the silence of students and teachers towards ambiguity, the helplessness to create a comprehensive emotional support program in high school, and how many times my proposals were met with blank stares. My father's comment intensified the anger within me, that "all we can do is to accept and reach goals".

Despite missing many learning opportunities during the crisis period, I still managed to advance literature comprehension skills. The lesson on "Sea wave" poem led me to bolero with a curiosity for historical contexts and micro expressions of love. Making connections with sentimental songs were beyond my expectation. Seeing me sang along, my father questioned whether I changed my taste in music. He started talking about his periods like a child talking about his passion for ice cream, with colorful insights on the way people treated artistic products from below the 17th parallel as well as many of his teenager "rebellions".

Music became a catalyst for a relationship. During our chats, I loved discussing the basis of bolero, for instance, whether Trinh Cong Son's style blended with contemporary trends and using the peaceful time to talk about future paths, self-care, and politics.

Listening to my father did not mean to forget myself. It was the validation of my perspective and a beginning towards new exploration. Fruitful conversations always involved critical thinking.

I gave up the odd belief that we could only work with like-minded people. The diversity provided us a fertile land to grow. In a learning environment,

students should be fostered to think independently and communicate with their peers.