

Anne Scahill Collection
11- ½ Frame Olympus Pen Slides
1 Audio Cassette [+ Transcript]

“HAT BOI” - VIETNAMESE OPERA
(Saigon 1970-73)

One of my enjoyable cultural experiences was my introduction to Vietnamese opera - the HAT BOI – an elaborate and colorful production.

Vietnamese *HAT BOI* is a tradition in Vietnam, dating from the 14th century. It had its origin in China, but after taking root in Vietnam developed into a distinct Vietnamese art form.

Hat Boi is a dramatic art form combining singing, dancing and instrumental music around a play whose contents were familiar to the audience. It may or may not be something formally committed to paper. **Hat Boi** plays range from the simple or crude to the complex or elaborate.

Ancient records indicate that the arts of singing, dancing and instrumental music existed in Vietnam from the first millennium B.C. By the 12 century A.D. they were flourishing and there was a tendency to combine these to form a theatre art form. Contact with the Chinese hastened the birth of this dramatic art form in Vietnam.

After the 1945 Revolution, performances were forbidden for a few years [it was a product of the hated feudal system!] but the ban was soon lifted.

A *Hat Boi* troupe existed in Saigon – since they had an especially large Chinese population.

I hope you enjoy these views!