

## THE TRANSFORMATION FROM TRADITIONAL THEATRE TROUPES TO COMMERCIAL ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES IN SAIGON

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### Abstract

In the evolutionary trajectory of Vietnam's national theatre, the 1955–1975 period in Saigon marked a profound transformation of *Cải lương* art in both organizational structure and performance practice. By employing historical methodology in conjunction with textual analysis of scripts and the retrospective examination of theatrical press archives, this article identifies the core transformations of this genre within the Southern urban space. The research focuses on three pivotal themes: (1) The professionalization of management models within the "great troupes" (*đại bang*); (2) The trend of modernizing script structures through social-psychological and "swordplay" (*kiếm hiệp*) themes; and (3) The reciprocal impact of recording technology and mass media on the popularization of the genre and the construction of artists' brand identity. The findings affirm that *Cải lương* in Saigon during this era serves as a quintessential example of the synthesis between identity preservation and the acculturation of modern elements. Consequently, the study elucidates a vibrant urban theatrical entity capable of flexible adaptation to the multidimensional shifts of the era.

**Keywords:** *Cải lương*, Saigon 1955–1975, Urban theatre, Great troupes (*Đại bang*), Acculturation.

### INTRODUCTION

In the historical trajectory of Vietnam's performing arts, *Cải lương* theatre serves not merely as a form of entertainment but as a cultural entity embodying the national psyche (Đỗ Dũng, 2003). The 1955–1975 period in Saigon marked the zenith of this genre, driven by the catalysts of urbanization and market economy. From the perspective of popular culture theory, this era represented a creative compromise between the cultural industry's impositions and the organic reception of the urban public (Storey, 2018). During this period, Saigon emerged as a "global city" – a vibrant crossroads where global modernization met local identity (Stur, 2020). According to Nguyễn Hồ Phong (2022), Saigon acted as the *Alma Mater* (the "nurturing mother") that facilitated the flourishing of *Cải lương*, thanks to a superior urban ecosystem comprising dense press networks, publishing houses, and professional financial resources. Within this space, *Cải lương* functioned as both a social adaptation mechanism and a well-structured urban service industry. However, alongside the professionalization of organizational models and dramaturgical innovations (Trần Văn Giàu & Trần Bạch Đằng, 1998), Nguyễn Hồ Phong (2022) identifies a critical research gap: previous publications often leaned toward subjective assessments or practical observations, lacking multi-dimensional analysis and systematic empirical data. Consequently, the identification of "novel variations" (*biến cách tân*) from the standpoint of an integrated urban cultural entity has yet to be adequately appraised in academic discourses. Against this backdrop, this article aims to elucidate the prosperity and pivotal artistic characteristics of Saigon *Cải lương* (1955–1975). By synthesizing primary sources, the research pursues two main objectives:

(1) To identify the operational models of the "great troupes" (*đại bang*); and (2) To analyze the shifts in script structures as a form of creative acculturation. The research findings seek to reaffirm the indispensable roles of artists and playwrights while drawing lessons on cultivating "Cultural Capital" for the public in the contemporary preservation of traditional arts.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the established research objectives, this study employs an interdisciplinary methodological framework situated within the fields of Cultural Studies and Arts Studies, specifically detailed as follows:

#### Historical Method

This serves as the primary method to reconstruct the developmental trajectory of Saigon's *Cải lương* theatre throughout the twenty-year span (1955–1975). By examining secondary sources notably the *Monograph of Ho Chi Minh City* (Trần Văn Giàu & Trần Bạch Đằng, 1998) and *The Long Journey of History* (Nguyễn Đình Tư, 2020) the research correlates socio-political fluctuations with shifts in *Cải lương* scriptwriting trends. This approach facilitates the identification of patterns regarding the prosperity of "great troupes" (*đại bang*) and the distribution of the theatre system in old Saigon.

#### Textual and Typological Analysis

This method is applied to scrutinize the thematic and structural content of representative plays within the social-psychological and "swordplay" (*kiếm hiệp*) genres. Through the analysis of archived and synthesized scripts from the works of Đỗ Dũng (2003) and Trần Minh Ngọc (2007), the study elucidates innovations in playwriting techniques, the construction of dramatic conflicts, and the integration of *tân cổ giáoduyên* (the

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synthesis of modern and traditional music). Such typology clarifies the distinction between traditional *Cải lương* and the "modernized" (*tân kỳ*) variations during the era of rapid urbanization.

### Archival Retrograde and Media Content Analysis

The study exploits primary sources, including scientific workshop proceedings, theatrical press critiques prior to 1975, and specialized memoirs. Cross-referencing contemporary expert assessments (Hoàng Chương, 1997) with empirical evidence ensures objectivity in evaluating the roles of recording technology and mass media systems in the popularization of *Cải lương*.

### Interdisciplinary Approach

Rather than treating *Cải lương* as an isolated artistic entity, this research situates it within the ecosystem of a nascent "cultural industry." This perspective allows for the intersection of economic factors (troupe management), technical elements (sound and lighting), and social dynamics (urban public taste) to explain the sustained prosperity of this genre amidst the East-West cultural crossroads.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Theatre Ecosystem and Saigon's Urban Context

**Centralized theatre clusters and urban cultural consumption:** The evolution of *Cải lương* in Saigon (1955–1975) was not merely a quantitative increase in performances but the result of a synchronized urban ecosystem. Theatre networks concentrated along the arterial roads of Districts 1, 3, and 5 transformed the urban core into a high-density "cultural sanctuary."

According to NguyễnHò Phong (2022), although not the birthplace of the genre, Saigon acted as the *Alma Mater* (nurturing mother) that facilitated its zenith. This role was fortified by superior infrastructure: a comprehensive transportation network that expanded market reach, a robust printing and press industry for promotion, and a professional class of entrepreneurs willing to finance the "great troupes" (*đại bang*). The cultural demands of citizens during this period mirrored the social psyche of a wartime city, where *Cải lương* functioned as a "psychological adaptation mechanism" for survival stress.

### A Comparison of Key Indicators between *Cải lương* and Modern Entertainment Media in Saigon (1960–1974)

Indicator	Family-based Troupes (Pre-1954)	"Đại bang" - Major Troupes (1955–1975)	Source Material (NguyễnHò Phong, 2022)
Number of members	20–30 members	60–100 members (Including actors, musicians, and technicians)	Confirmed as the largest scale in the Southern region with a powerful force of artists.
Management structure	Centralized within the family	Stratified: Management – Artistic – Technical	Operating under a "cultural enterprise" model, utilizing Saigon's urban infrastructure as an "Alma Mater".
Performances per month	12–16 performances	20–30 performances (Combined with provincial tours)	Major troupes like Kim Chung could manage up to seven touring units simultaneously.
Operational scope	Primarily local	Saigon as the hub, followed by nationwide tours	Saigon served as the largest consumer market and a venue for quality verification before touring.
Revenue sources	Direct ticket sales	Tickets + Advertising + Recordings + Sponsorships	Maximizing "personal brand" value and the vinyl record industry to diversify revenue streams.
Public appeal	Based on vocal techniques	Star System	98.7% of the audience expects the participation of famous artists in performances.

Empirical data from NguyễnHò Phong's thesis indicates that the primary drivers for attendance were the need for emotional relief (98.7%) and the desire for contemporary life reflection in scripts (62.1%). These factors explain the consistent "sold-out" status across all seating segments in Saigon's central theatres.

### Interplay between *Cải lương* and Modern Mass Media:

From the early 1960s, the boom of commercial cinema and the introduction of television (1966) subjected *Cải lương* to fierce competition. With over 40 inner-city cinemas compared to approximately 12–18 *Cải lương* venues, the traditional stage was compelled to restructure its dramaturgy for survival. This interaction catalyzed a process of "media convergence," where *Cải lương* transcended physical theatres to permeate vinyl records and radio airwaves. However, in a contemporary comparative analysis, NguyễnHò Phong (2022) highlights a paradox in the competitive capacity between current state-owned and private entities. Data reveals that while private stages (e.g., Chí Linh – Vân Hà) achieve an 87.6% occupancy rate (with 94.5% voluntary ticket sales), the flagship state-owned TrầnHữu Trang Theatre only reaches 42.0% occupancy, with actual ticket sales hovering at a mere 9.8%. A core reason for this disparity lies in marketing management. While private troupes allocate 11.2% to 20.3% of their total investment to promotional activities, state-owned units allocate nearly 0% to this department. This deficiency in marketing strategy and slow technological adaptation has hindered state-funded *Cải lương* from reclaiming the audience levels enjoyed during the 1955–1975 "Golden Age."

Comparative data demonstrate that, despite the surge of commercial cinema, the *Cải lương* system maintained a resilient foothold by leveraging Saigon's role as an "Alma Mater" (nurturing mother) in terms of media infrastructure and investment networks. Rather than facing a decline, *Cải lương* proactively initiated a process of "media convergence" through three pivotal strategies:

**Product Restructuring:** Performance durations were streamlined while dramatic conflicts were intensified to align with the accelerated pace and consumption habits of urbanites. that artistic charisma served as an indispensable guarantor of commercial viability, with 98.7% of the audience basing their attendance decisions on the presence of renowned "stars."

**Socio-psychological Coping Mechanism:** Within the exigencies of a wartime urban environment, *Cải lương* functioned as a "psychosocial adaptation mechanism," enabling citizens to alleviate existential pressures and re-engage with humanitarian values.

Conclusion: The emergence of modern audiovisual media did not result in displacement; on the contrary, it catalyzed the integration of sound recording and television to diversify distribution channels. This process marked a critical transition from traditional performance to a fully-fledged commercial entertainment industry, establishing the foundational framework for a mass-culture consumer society in Vietnam.

### The Professionalization of the "Great Troupe" Model and the Emergence of the Star System

**Organizational Structure, Personnel, and the Support of the Urban Ecosystem:** The 1955–1975 period marked a transformative shift for Saigon's *Cải lương* from traditional "family-based troupes" to corporate-oriented performance organizations. The workforce scale within these "great troupes" (*đại bang*) surged from 20–30 members to 60–100, comprising specialized teams ranging from artistic and technical departments to logistics (Đỗ Dũng, 2003; Trần Minh Ngọc, 2007). A distinct functional hierarchy was established: managers oversaw strategic and financial administration; specialized departments handled scriptwriting and training; while technical crews managed modern scenography and acoustics. This professionalization operated within Saigon's superior urban ecosystem. With its inter-provincial transportation infrastructure, high density of theatre venues, and dynamic press environment, Saigon served as a central hub for resource coordination (NguyễnHò Phong, 2022). Notably, the infiltration of the entrepreneurial class into the cultural market provided vital re-investment capital, enabling troupes to operate on an industrial scale. The case of the Kim Chung Group serves as a quintessential example of a multi-branch management model. By simultaneously operating seven touring troupes and maintaining a flexible artist rotation system, Kim Chung optimized performance frequency, averaging 20–30 shows per month (Ho Chi Minh City Theatre Association, 2018). Rather than relying solely on box office receipts, these "great troupes" diversified their revenue streams through advertising, sponsorships, and vinyl record production. Viewed through the lens of the "field of cultural production" (Bourdieu, 1993), these entities created a semi-autonomous space where economic and artistic factors interacted closely to define the modern identity of urban *Cải lương*.

### Comparative Analysis of Organizational Models and Operational Mechanisms between Traditional Troupes and Cải Lương "Great Troupes" (1950–1975)

**The Star System and the Validating Role of Cultural Institutions:** Parallel to the professionalization of troupe organization, the Saigon *Cải lương* market witnessed the emergence of a structured "star system," wherein the celebrity of performers became a critical determinant of box-office viability. Amidst fierce competition, cultivating an artist's personal brand emerged as a pivotal strategy to capture public attention. A key institutional factor in validating an artist's status was the Thanh Tâm Award, established in 1958 by journalist Trần Tấn Quốc. According to Hoàng Chương (1997), this accolade transcended mere artistic recognition by evaluating professional ethics and stylistic integrity. Receiving a Thanh Tâm award served as a high-value endorsement within the theatrical community, significantly enhancing an artist's professional standing and bargaining power in performance contracts. Furthermore, the burgeoning recording industry and vinyl distribution played an essential role in amplifying an artist's reach. Labels such as Asia, Việt Nam, and Hoàn Sơn disseminated the voices of *Cải lương* stars to a mass audience, including those unable to attend live performances. This technological mediation allowed artists' vocal styles to permeate popular culture, solidifying their public personas. Consequently, figures like Thanh Nga, Hùng Cường, and Bạch Tuyết evolved into cultural icons of the era (Ho Chi Minh City Theatre Association, 2018). Empirical findings from NguyễnHò Phong (2022) confirm that "star preference" remains a consistent psychological trait among the *Cải lương* audience. Data reveal that 98.7% of spectators expect the participation of renowned performers, underscoring the formidable power of "personal brand equity" in audience attraction. Effectively, the allure of *Cải lương* was inextricably linked to the presence of established names on stage. By synthesizing the organizational capacity of "great troupes," the validation of prestigious awards, and the reach of mass media, Saigon *Cải lương* established a sophisticated star system. This framework not only heightened the competitiveness of theatrical units but also sustained the genre's appeal amidst the influx of Western entertainment trends within the urban landscape.

### Variations in Scriptwriting and Performance Arts

**Social-Psychological Scripts: Reflecting Family Conflicts and Urban Morality:** The 1955–1975 period marked a pivotal transition in *Cải lương* dramaturgy, shifting from classical archetypes to contemporary realism. This genre focused on the fractures within traditional family structures under the pressures of urbanization.

Indicators	Family-based Troupes (Pre-1954)	Great Troupes / "Đại Bang" (1955–1975)	Interpretive Data (NguyễnHò Phong, 2022)
Personnel Scale	20–30 members	60–100 members (Including actors, musicians, and technicians)	Reconfirmed as the largest regional scale in the South with a formidable force of artists.
Management Structure	Family-centralized	Functional Hierarchy: Administration – Artistic – Technical	Operated under a "cultural enterprise" model, leveraging Saigon's urban infrastructure as an Alma Mater.
Performances per Month	12–16 shows	20–30 shows (Maintained high frequency through touring rotation)	Major troupes like Kim Chung could simultaneously operate up to seven touring units.
Operational Scope	Primarily local/regional	Saigon as the hub, followed by nationwide tours	Saigon served as the primary consumer market and a quality-validation center prior to provincial touring.
Revenue Streams	Direct box office receipts	Box office + Advertising + Recording contracts + Sponsorships	Maximized artists' "personal branding" and vinyl technology to diversify income sources.
Public Attraction	Based on vocal techniques	The Star System	98.7% of the audience expected the participation of renowned stars in performances.

According to research by Đỗ Dũng (2003), prominent playwrights such as Hà Triều – Hoa Phượng, Kiên Giang, and Quy Sắc introduced modern issues including wealth disparity, the status of women in a changing society, and the tension between traditional ethics and hedonistic lifestyles onto the stage. This thematic shift directly addressed the expectations of the urban public. Empirical data from Nguyễn Hồ Phong (2022) indicates that 62.1% of the audience sought performances that "reflected contemporary realities." Furthermore, with the primary demand for "alleviating personal emotional stress" reaching an absolute majority of 98.7%, these social-psychological scripts functioned as a vital mechanism for psychological consolation amidst the volatility of a wartime city. Artistically, this genre was characterized by the moderation of symbolic conventions in favor of method acting. Classic works such as *Niradôihươngphần* and *Con gáichịHằng* served not merely as individual tragedies but as sociological analyses of urban morality (Trần Minh Ngọc, 2007). The sophisticated integration of traditional *Vọngcổ* melodies into modern dramatic situations created a profound emotional resonance, allowing the urban audience to find reflections of their own destinies within the characters' lives.

**Swordplay and "HòQuảng" Scripts: The Convergence of Stagecraft and Modern Music:** Parallel to social-psychological dramas, "Swordplay" (*Kiếmhiệp*) and *HòQuảng* scripts represented a high-tech entertainment trend, showcasing the most pronounced visual "innovations." To counter the expansion of Hong Kong cinema, major troupes such as Kim Chung and Dạ Lý Hương optimized stagecraft through aerial stunts, fog effects, and polychromatic lighting systems to construct a phantasmagoric stage environment. This modernization was fully aligned with the expectations of the urban public. Empirical data from Nguyễn Hồ Phong (2022) indicates an almost absolute demand (99.7%) for the "application of modern technology" and performances held in "luxurious venues." The integration of visual effects was not merely an imitation of cinema but a strategic response to the rigorous aesthetic standards of urbanites accustomed to Western entertainment media. Musically, this genre established a complex auditory space by synthesizing *HòQuảng* melodies, Vietnamese traditional music, and newly arranged background scores. According to Hoàng Chương (1997), such novelty did not erode the identity of *Cải lương*, as playwrights consistently positioned the *Vọngcổ* as the "central coordinate." From this core, various *lý* melodies and short musical pieces were flexibly adapted to suit the fast-paced and dramatic tempo characteristic of the swordplay genre.

**Tân cổgiaoduyên: Hybridity Strategies and Efforts to "Rejuvenate" the Audience:** One of the historical breakthroughs of the stage during this period was the emergence of *Tân cổgiaoduyên* a sophisticated form of hybridity between Western modern music (*Tân nhạc*) and traditional *Vọngcổ*. This was not merely an experimental musical endeavor but a core strategy aimed at capturing the youth demographic and adapting to the "Americanization" trends prevalent in urban Saigon. The success of this form, inextricably linked to the renowned playwright Viễn Châu, maximized the influence of vinyl records and radio broadcasting to popularize *Cải lương*. By restructuring songs into a modern, accessible format, *Cải lương* was able to maintain its standing amidst the influx of Western musical waves. However, behind this formal innovation, the content consistently preserved a rigorous didactic nature. According to

data from Nguyễn Hồ Phong (2022), 99.3% of the public demanded that works "embody the message of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty," while 96.0% sought to be "instilled with faith in goodness." From a cultural perspective, despite the avant-garde variations in script and melody, the *Vọngcổ* remained the "moral and identity coordinate." This synthesis serves as evidence of the national culture's capacity for self-renewal and its "sublime orientation toward goodness" (Trần Trọng Đăng, 2013). Consequently, *Tân cổgiaoduyên* not only addressed market economy challenges but also contributed to the accumulation of Cultural Capital for Saigon's urbanites during a highly volatile era.

## The Impact of Sound Technology and Mass Media

**The Role of Recording Labels and the Universalization of the *Vọngcổ* Melody:** While the theater provided a visual performance space, the vinyl record technology of the 1955–1975 period served as the primary medium through which *Cải lương* permeated the private spheres of Vietnamese households. The dominance of major recording labels such as Asia, Việt Nam, Hoàng Sơn, and Hồng Hoa transformed the *Vọngcổ* from a live performance entity into a "cultural commodity" capable of mass reproduction. Owning a gramophone and vinyl records featuring legendary vocalists like Út Trà Ôn or Thanh Nga was not merely a form of cultural consumption but also a status symbol of the middle-class lifestyle in Saigon. Recording labels functioned simultaneously as "aesthetic filters" and "talent launchers." Through an extensive distribution infrastructure, *Tân cổgiaoduyên* tracks released by the Việt Nam label catalyzed waves of public taste that reached the remotest areas of the six provinces of Southern Vietnam (*Lục tỉnh Nam Kỳ*) regions where audiences lacked direct access to live theaters (Trần Minh Ngọc, 2007). More importantly, recording technology directly intervened in the standardization of vocal styles and rhythmic phrasing, establishing a distinctive "sonic identity" for Saigon's *Cải lương* that remains an artistic benchmark to this day. The interaction between the market and technology during this era reflects a dynamic approach to artistic asset management. Contrasting with the passivity often found in traditional performance models, the infiltration of the recording industry elevated artists to "stage royalty" with a geographical reach that transcended physical boundaries. This established the foundational framework for an embryonic entertainment industry ecosystem in Southern Vietnam (Nguyễn Hồ Phong, 2022).

**Theatrical Journalism and the Prosperity of the Performing Arts Market:** The boom of private press in Saigon gave rise to a unique segment: theatrical journalism, which served as a strategic bridge between theatrical troupes and the public. Through a mechanism of "symbiotic media," theatrical journalists such as Trần Tấn Quốc and Nguyễn Ang Ca operated as influential opinion leaders. According to Nguyễn Đình Tư (2020), "behind-the-scenes" columns transformed the lives of artists into a constituent element of popular culture, stimulating both curiosity and the demand for cultural consumption among urbanites. Beyond its informative role, theatrical journalism functioned as an institutional framework for artistic quality validation. In-depth critiques and public polls established a "positive feedback loop": the press generated public discourse, which drove audiences to theaters, thereby increasing revenue and creating resources for artistic reinvestment (Ho Chi Minh City Theatre Association, 2018).

This model exemplifies the operation of an urban cultural market that was among the most developed in Southeast Asia at the time.

### EAST-WEST ACCULTURATION IN SAIGON'S *CÁILƯƠNG* (1955–1975)

Amidst intensive urbanization, Saigon's *Cáilương* stage underwent a profound process of acculturation. This did not signify a total replacement of tradition but rather a selective integration of Western elements to adapt to evolving tastes. The stage during this era functioned as an intersectional space, where Western technical, aesthetic, and musical components were restructured according to indigenous aesthetic logic (Brandon, 1967; Hoàng Chương, 1997). Consequently, *Cáilương* successfully maintained its Southern Vietnamese identity while expanding its artistic expression within a modern urban environment.

#### The Context of Cultural Exchange and the Expansion of Theatrical Aesthetic Space

**Saigon – A Hub of East-West Acculturation:** During the 1955–1975 period, Saigon operated as a multicultural urban entity, serving as a confluence for international trends ranging from cinema and music to Western dramaturgy. The proliferation of movie theaters, tea rooms (*phòng trà*), and literary journals established a dynamic entertainment ecosystem, propelling *Cáilương* into a trajectory of innovation. According to Brandon (1967), this process was part of a broader modernization trend in Asian theater, where Western staging techniques and script structures were integrated to ensure compatibility with urban contexts. In Saigon, the press not only introduced new artistic movements but also served as a theoretical forum, enabling playwrights and directors to adapt foreign elements according to indigenous cultural logic. This transformed *Cáilương* into a unique intersectional space of cultural fusion.

**Shifts in Public Taste and the Pressure for Aesthetic Paradigm Innovation:** Regular exposure to modern forms of entertainment such as cinema, youth music, and spoken drama restructured the aesthetic expectations of the Saigon public. Audiences were no longer satisfied with purely symbolic and stylized performances (*ước lệ*); instead, they demanded heightened dramaturgy, realism, and powerful visual effects. The innovation of *Cáilương*, as noted by Hoàng Chương (1997), was the result of self-driven efforts to maintain competitiveness and cater to the diverse tastes of urbanites. Investments in stagecraft ranging from modern lighting and sound systems to contemporary scenography allowed *Cáilương* to break free from traditional constraints and create more vivid forms of expression. This became the prerequisite for the formation of a new aesthetic paradigm, harmoniously blending national identity with the contemporary zeitgeist.

#### Western Dramaturgical Acculturation and Cultural Integration Techniques

The East-West integration within *Cáilương* during the 1955–1975 period was structured around three core technical pillars: Dramaturgy: Playwrights utilized Aristotelian dramatic structures (conflict, complication, and resolution) in conjunction with character-driven psychological development. According to Brandon (1967), this represented a critical

transition from stylized, symbolic performance to modern theater. Everyday tragedies were "Westernized" in structure yet remained inherently national through the preservation of traditional language and melodies (Đỗ Dũng, 2003).

**Scenography:** The implementation of linear perspective, focused spotlighting, and realist design replaced traditional symbolic backdrops. This convergence not only enhanced visual effects but also catered to the cinematic aesthetic preferred by urbanites (Hoàng Chương, 1997).

**Musicology:** A model of parallel harmony was established between the traditional ensemble and Western instruments (electric guitar, saxophone). According to Trần Minh Ngọc (2007), Western instruments functioned to create atmosphere (background), while traditional instruments maintained the emotional lead, ensuring modernity without eroding the rhythmic essence of national identity.

### CONCLUSION

The 1955–1975 period is established as the "Golden Age" of Saigon's *Cáilương*, serving as a testament to its intrinsic vitality and superior capacity for acculturation. This prosperity was not confined to performance values alone but was the result of the formation of a comprehensive entertainment industry, characterized by the professional "great troupe" (*đại bang*) management model, a structured Star system, and robust support from mass media technologies.

Based on the research findings, this paper draws core lessons and proposes breakthrough solutions to revitalize *Cáilương* in the digital era:

**Adaptability:** Traditional arts must proactively engage in a "dialogue" with the contemporary zeitgeist, leveraging technology to disseminate core values rather than remaining confined within the past.

**Administrative Restructuring:** Transitioning from a flat-rate subsidy mechanism to a public service commissioning model (in accordance with Decree 60/2021/NĐ-CP); establishing specialized research centers and departments for Communication and Arts Education to implement methodical marketing strategies.

**Cultivating Cultural Capital:** Implementing a long-term "School Theatre" strategy (lasting at least 15 years) to instill consumption habits and artistic literacy in future generations of audiences.

The study reaffirms *Cáilương* as a cultural entity oriented toward "sublime goodness" (Trần Trọng Đăng, 2013). The 1955–1975 era left behind an ideal model for harmonizing economics and aesthetics, national identity, and Western techniques. In the context of globalization, inheriting the spirit of "innovation within tradition" from previous generations remains the most sustainable pathway for *Cáilương* to continue its journey of serving the Vietnamese soul.

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