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### **Tinh Khuc Hoang Viet Khanh**

When I am about to be brainwashed by meaningless lyrics from young and trendy songwriters, Hoang Viet Khanh comes to resuscitate. In [Tinh Khuc Hoang Viet Khanh](#), which featured ten of his selected ballads, he has me paid attention to his every word because the music is filled with poetic aesthetics. In fact, his compositions could be read like poems without musical notes.

The first time I was struck by "[Cho Xuan](#)," the image of a mother, waiting spring after spring for her son to return, never escapes my mind. Backed up by the soul-stirring orchestral arrangement from Luan Hoang (HVK's younger brother who is responsible for the production of the album), Trinh Vinh Trinh gives one of her finest performances. Her bona fide delivery aerates the song. When she blazes the chorus, the smoke of the burning golden leaves is visible.

Beside TVT, Cam Van is no less expressive in her poignant rendition of "[Goc Nay Cua Em](#)." The scabrous bite in her voice thickens the emotional narrative of a parentless child being lonely in the cold corner of an empty street. Accompanied by Thanh Huy's strumming guitar, she sings with so much soul that we could almost hear the cries in her voice. She has placed herself in HVK's genuine lyrical content, and performs as if she has lived the character's life.

Although Ngoc Anh is younger than Cam Van, she has a stickier (not necessarily better) gravel quality in her voice. With a razor-sharp emotional expression, she gives a nostalgic presentation of "Dong Song va Tinh Toi," a river that is filled with HVK's childhood recollections. Her duet with Quang Minh on "Tim Toi" is a strange combination. Unfortunately, his sweet voice doesn't blend right with her denser timbre.

Quang Ly and My Dung are the two vocalists I've heard of for the first time, yet their indelible contributions attract me. With his pitch-perfect vocals combined with his sinuous phrasings, Quang Ly gives "Bong Dang" and "Ngay Xua Yeu Dau" (HVK's first composition written when he was eighteen) exotic tinctures. My Dung also delivers a ravishing recitation of "Nho Ve Da Lat."

Unlike today's popular hits, HVK's music takes time to assimilate. Each song requires personal attention, and best to be experienced in an intimate atmosphere. What makes HVK a fine musician is that he is both a composer and lyricist. The combination gives singers a solid understanding of his music for their individual interpretations; therefore, they are capable of expressing his art to its fullest potential.

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