

ZUMMY · VIETNAM

Ầu Ơ (Hát Ru)

Key: C

~60 BPM

Guitar & Piano

VERSE 1

C F C

Ầu ơ... ầu ơ...

F C G7

à ơi, ngủ đi con hỡi,

(Ầu ơ... à ơi — sleep now, my child.)

C F C

Sleep now, little one, the evening's drawing near,

F C G7

mother's song will carry you, so close and always here.

VERSE 2

C F C

Ầu ơ... ầu ơ...

F C G7

gió đưa con võng, mẹ ngồi mẹ ru,

(The wind rocks your hammock, and mother sits and sings.)

C F C

The wind will rock your hammock soft, beneath the bamboo shade,

F C G7

and mother's voice will follow you, however far you've strayed.

C

Hát ru — "lullaby singing" — is one of the most cherished folk traditions in Vietnam, especially in the countryside, where the long, wandering interjections "ầu ơ" and "à ơi" open almost every lullaby. There is no single "correct" hát ru: mothers improvise freely, weaving in whatever is on their mind that evening — a wish for their child, a memory, even their own private sadness — all carried inside that same unmistakable opening call.

Traditional Vietnamese hát ru style. The Vietnamese lines here use real, characteristic interjections and imagery from the tradition; the English lyrics are a singable adaptation, not a literal translation of one fixed historical text.