

Dance, The Spirit of Cambodia

A project of the Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh

Saturday and Sunday, September 8–9; 2001
Zellerbach Hall

Artistic Director
Proeung Chhieng

The Company

Classical Dancers

Bouth On, Chamroeun Sophea, Eath Kompheak Neary, Him Nala,
Hul Phoeunnary, Hun Pen, Khieu Sotheavy, Ouk Solichumnith, Pen Sokchea,
Pen Sokhuon, Peov Yousedy, Pich Chouvitida, Prom Mary, Pum Bun Chanrath,
Ros Yaran, Sam Limsothear, Sam Sathya, Sam Savin, Soeur Thavarak,
Sok Sokhoeun, Vuth Chan Moly, Yorn Tom

Folk Dancers

Buth Channa, Chheng Sochenda, Chhim Sokha, Nguon Sam Ath,
Ourn Sophon, Soeur Vuthy, Sok Tong

Musicians

Ek Son, Khuon Chhoy, Nol Soboun, Nou Sokha, Proeung Pruon, Yun Khean

Singers

Dourng Marey, Sin Sovannary, Yann Borin

Costumers

Sim Montha, Soth Somaly

Assistant Company Manager

Has Seila

Produced by

New England Foundation for the Arts, Asia Society,
and Lisa Booth Management, Inc.

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Robam Apsara

Mera Sok Sokhoeun

Apsara Sam Sathya, Pich Chouvitida,
Ouk Solichumnith, Prom Mary,
Sam Savin, Hun Pen

A signature work of the classical repertory, Robam Apsara is a modern piece created under the guidance of Queen Kossamak Nearyrath in the 1950s. Its gestural vocabulary and elaborate costumes are inspired by the more than 1,500 apsara (celestial dancers) carved throughout Angkor Wat, the extraordinary temple complex completed in 1150. The musical accompaniment of the pin peat ensemble overlapped with melodic vocals is also typical of the classical style. The lyrics describe the life of these celestial beings in a beautiful garden. Complex layered crowns, pleated skirts, and elaborate jewelry across the chest and waist connect these live dancers with those mediators of heaven and earth depicted on temple walls.

The legacy of the Kingdom of Angkor (9th–13th centuries) forms the base of much that is identified as Khmer—the centrality of dance and music, a celebration of symmetry and decoration, a reverence for the divine. Each of these elements is brought to life in this dance, a piece about an encounter between Mera—a mythical ancestor of the Cambodian people — and her celestial dance partners. The serenity of the dancers belies the difficulty of the technique, which demands extreme flexibility, balance, precision, and control. Movement is at once grounded (no leaps or quick turns) and fluid. The dance ends as it begins as the apsara revert back to stone in a final pose taken directly from thousand-year-old images.

From its inception, Robam Apsara was the centerpiece of performances for royal and state officials. Its first star is now the Minister of Culture, HRH Buppha Devi, premier dancer of her generation, and daughter of King Sihanouk. With the Diaspora of Cambodians following the Khmer Rouge regime, Robam Apsara was taught and performed in refugee camps and in expatriate Cambodian communities around the world. Today, it is a potent statement of national identity across borders.

Robam Tunsuong

Konlong (Bumble Bee)	Nguon Sam Ath
Wild Ox	Ourn Sophon
Wild Ox	Sok Tong
Hunter and Singer	Yann Borin
Tiger and Drummer	Nou Sokha

Concurrent with the political nationalism of the 1950s and '60s, artists from the Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA) began to learn and document village-based performance traditions. Sometimes artists built new works based on everyday movements (for example, the rhythmic patterns of a farmer picking cardamom seeds); others returned with interpretations of performances and rites. Robam Tunsuong's origins are in a ritual performed in homage to ancestral spirits by members of the Poar ethnic group in Konpong Speu and Pursat Provinces. As reworked for theatrical presentation, the piece has been part of the folk dance repertoire nearly 40 years.

Long ago, the story goes, a king ordered a hunter to capture a wild ox (tunsuong) for him. The hunter set off into the forest and came upon not one, but two oxen engaged in a courtship dance. A tiger, on the lookout for prey, arrived on the scene as well. Captivated by the rhythm and movements of the dance, neither the hunter nor the tiger could bring himself to attack. The hunter returned to face his king, and empty-handed, re-enacted his story. So moved by this story was the king that he pardoned the hunter.

As performed on stage, the hunter is a singer, seated with a cross-bow. The tiger, which according to the legend moved to the beat of the oxen's dance, is the drummer. Playing a ploy, a kind of mouth organ made from a gourd and bamboo pipes, another musician adds the drone of Konlong (a bumble bee), said to have circled the animals as they approached one another. The two oxen wear headdresses shaped from real horns. Reflecting the dance's sacred origin, the lyrics begin with an invocation to Preah Pisnukar, legendary architect of Angkor Wat and a patron of the arts. Also mentioned are a hunter's altar, the forest with its ample leaves and delicious fruit, and small and large oxen.

Solo Opakar

Nol Soboun

This suite of instrumental (opakar) solos features some of Cambodia's many woodwind instruments.

Bong Kok Sneng

This piece, dated to the 6th century, features the sneng, a buffalo horn. Traditionally, this instrument is carried by hunters who use it to call for help when lost in the woods, or to imitate an elephant's call by hunters seeking to capture them.

Surin Knang Phnom

A single free-reed flute, the pey pok is featured in this piece, now considered part of the folk repertoire. Surin, now a province in northeastern Thailand, was once part of Cambodia's territories. Over the course of time, this centuries-old, plaintive tune has acquired multiple meanings. It can evoke nostalgia for one's place of birth for those now living elsewhere. In more contemporary times, this theme was revisited when H.E. Pich Tum Kravel wrote a text to this melody that recalls and describes the former Khmer lands that are now part of Cambodia's neighbors.

Sdech Yaeng

"King Walks," part of the folk repertoire, is a wedding piece played on the pey ar, a double-reed flute made of bamboo. This instrument is only used in the Arakk (worship of the spirit) and Kar (wedding) ceremonies.

Cheut Chapp

Part of the court or classical repertoire, this "action tune" accompanies combat scenes or situations in dance dramas and large shadow puppet theater performances. The sralai featured here is a quadruple-reed oboe used in the pin peat ensemble.

Chhayam

Yorn Tom, drum, comedian

Sok Tong, drum

Ourn Sophon, drum

Soeur Thavarak, drum

Soeur Vuthy, gong

Chheng Sochenda, krab

Buth Channa, cymbals

Chhim Sokha, comedian

This raucous, improvised procession frequently precedes ceremonies to and through Buddhist temple complexes in villages and cities. Chhayam is a community event, performed for many occasions, such as celebrating a successful harvest and the New Year. Chhayam features the long-drum (skor chhayam), clashing hand-held cymbals, wooden clackers (krab), and other noisemakers made of commonly found materials. The performers show off in comic masks and exaggerated hair styles and make-up. Communal and spontaneous, the combination of drumming, comic exhibitions, and animated vernacular call-and-response vocals (at times nonsensical) is characteristic of Chhayam. The work has been staged and included in concert performances since the 1950s.

Robam Makar

Vorachhun	Khieu Sotheavy
Moni Mekhala	Ros Yaran
Male role	Peov Yousedy
Male role	Pen Sok Huon
Male role	Pen Sokchea

Male role	Sam Limsohear
Male role	Hul Phoeunnary
Male role	Chamroeun Sophea
Female role	Sok Sokhoeun
Female role	Sam Savin
Female role	Vuth Chan Moly
Female role	Prom Mary
Female role	Pich Chouvitida
Female role	Him Nala

A non-narrative work performed at the court at least since the reign of King Sisowath in the early 20th century, this dance weaves together characters from Khmer legend and cosmology, and incorporates elements from the dance-drama tradition. Robam Makar is named for its central character—a mythical female sea creature associated with the fertility of rivers, lakes, and oceans. The divine prince Vorachhun opens the dance, brandishing his dagger. Vorachhun exits, then reappears in the company of Moni Mekhala, goddess of the seas, in her turquoise bodice, and an entourage of dancers. While all performers are embellished and bejeweled, male characters are distinguished from females by shoulder epaulets and brocade pantaloons (kben). Females wear long brocade skirts and sequined velvet sashes across their chests. Together, they manipulate decorated fans, representing the scales of the makar.

INTERMISSION

Reamker

(Excerpt)

Recitation, music, and codified movements are hallmarks of classical dance-drama. In the Reamker, the complexity with which these elements are combined is especially rich.

Four archetypes—the male, female, ogre/giant, and monkey—form the basis of Cambodia’s classical style and are present in non-narrative and story-based choreographies. Character types and then specific roles are passed from teacher to student based on individual traits and talents. While the four types share an elaborate gestural language and underlying movement vocabulary, each is distinguished by particular carriage, expression, and stance. These traits are further defined depending on the specific role. Women portray all but the monkey, which, since the middle of the 20th century, has been played by men.

Preah Ream	Khieu Sotheavy
Preah Leak	Eath Kompheak Neary
Neang Seda	Sam Sathya
Krong Reap	Bouth On
Hanuman	Soeur Thavarak
Nil Ek	Pum Bun Chanrath
Monkey Soldiers	Soeur Vuthy, Sok Tong, Buth Channa, Yorn Tom, Ourn Sophon, Chheng Sochenda
Giant-Ogre Soldiers	Pen Sokhuon, Hul Phoeunnary, Pen Sokchea, Sam Limsohear, Peov Yousedy, Chamroeun Sophea
Sovann Maccha	Ouk Solichumnith
Mermaids	Hun Pen, Sam Savin, Prom Mary, Him Nala, Ros Yaran, Vuth Chan Moly
Candle Dancers	Ros Yaran, Him Nala, Ouk Solichumnith, Prom Mary, Pich Chouvitida, Vuth Chan Moly, Hun Pen, Sok Sokhoeun

Along with the Mahabharata, the Ramayana is a Hindu epic of Indian origin that finds expression throughout Southeast Asia. In Cambodia, a Sanskrit inscription from the 7th century encourages devotees to recite the Ramayana daily as a means of merit making. Stone reliefs on temples as far back as the 10th century depict scenes from this complex story of love and war. A uniquely Khmer version of the written text, the Reamker is dated to the 16th century, by which time Buddhism was integrated into the evolving Khmer culture. The stories of the Reamker provide a direct link from a mythic past to present realities. Successive generations have interpreted the story as both a reflection of history and present circumstances. Its characters play out conflicts of good over evil, of loyalty, bravery, and modesty over greed, cowardice, and dishonor in performances of large shadow puppet theater (Sbeik Thom), all-male masked dance-drama (Lakhaon Khaol), and classical dance-drama.

While the general story line of the Ramayana has been conserved, the Reamker contains episodes and innovations not found in Indian versions of the story, such as the encounter between Sovann Maccha and Hanuman, seen here. Also, in the Khmer telling, characters are decidedly human. Though Preah Ream (Rama), around whom the tale centers, is recognized as an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, his characteristics and those of the others in the story are interpreted as those of mortals, not of gods.

Synopsis

This excerpt picks up the story as preparations are made by Preah Ream (Prince Rama) and his brother, Preah Leak (Laksmana), to rescue Ream's wife, the kidnapped Neang Seda (Princess Sita), from the evil Krong Reap (Ravana) in the land of the giants—Krong Langka.

Scene I

The monkey general Hanuman (in white) and his aide-de-camp Nil Ek (in black), prepare their army for battle. Preah Ream (in green), and Preah Leak (in yellow) enter and review the troops. Under Preah Ream's urgent order, the monkey soldiers begin to build a bridge of stones across the sea to reach Krong Langka, land of the giant-ogres, where Neang Seda is held captive.

Their efforts are thwarted by Sovann Maccha, queen of the mermaids and her entourage. These sea creatures with tails and short crowns remove each boulder placed on the water. The monkeys protest, but to no avail; indignant, they capture and detain the fish. Sovann Maccha is left alone in her watery kingdom. Hanuman vows to solve the problem.

Scene II

Diving to the bottom of the sea, Hanuman approaches Sovann Maccha, planning to seduce her into supporting his cause. Hanuman sings to the mermaid queen, telling Sovann Maccha that before he saw her, he wanted to destroy the fish kingdom completely, but now he has changed his mind. Sovann Maccha replies that he shouldn't be so arrogant or he will bring on bad karma to himself. As they dance together their argument ceases; she agrees to help build the bridge and he holds her in his arms.

Scene III

With the bridge completed and their journey continued, the princes lead the monkey soldiers into battle against the army of giant-ogres. Preah Ream proclaims that he will fight the evil Krong Reap until death. Unafraid, Krong Reap, a 10-headed mask atop his head, is defiant. The two duel center stage. Preah Ream and his monkey army are victorious, but the evil giant escapes.

Scene IV

Meanwhile, Neang Seda is seen captive in a small cell, without freedom or friends. "Oh Seda," the chorus sings, "you are alone and heartbroken, longing for your husband." Neang Seda sings that she would rather die than fall into the giant's hands and that she hopes to meet Preah Ream in the next life. She weeps.

The battle against the giants won, Preah Ream's forces discover Neang Seda. Preah Ream asks her if she has been faithful to him during her long captivity. She swears that in body and soul, she has remained faithful to Preah Ream, but he still has doubts. To demonstrate her innocence, she undergoes a trial by fire.

Scene V

Neang Seda ascends a platform of fire, while her attendants, candles in their hands, circle round. The chorus sings: "I have truly been faithful to you. Here is fire as my witness."

Scene VI

Neang Seda emerges unscathed. Proven innocent, she is joined by Preah Ream, Preah Leak, and their army of monkey soldiers. Triumphant, they depart. "Leading the troops back home," sings the chorus, "the graceful Seda by his side, Preah Ream brings peace to his kingdom."

Dance, *The Spirit of Cambodia* is a collaborative project reflecting a shared commitment to Cambodian dance and music as cultural treasures of Cambodia, Asia, and the world. Our profound respect for these living traditions informs all of our efforts.

In 1990, the Classical Dance Company of Cambodia toured the United States. At that time the New England Foundation for the Arts, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (where I was then executive director), and other organizations began working with master dancers and musicians both in Cambodia and in the United States to assist in the restoration and preservation of Cambodian dance. Much has been accomplished in this past decade. With this project, we are proud to continue to share with American audiences the beauty and complexity of Cambodia's performing arts and to help increase the understanding of the history, beliefs, and values that inform these extraordinary traditions. Most importantly, we hope that this performance illuminates the crucial work being done by the performers, teachers, and students at the Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA) and expands the knowledge of and support for this work.

—Samuel A. Miller, Executive Director,
New England Foundation for the Arts

Cambodia and the Arts

The arts are often seen as a reflection of a society's politics, economics, religions, and conflicts. In Cambodia, dance is more than a mirror; it is an agent of history. Cambodian dance encompasses popular rites and practices of a village-based folk culture traced to prehistoric times. Its classical tradition can be traced in ancient carvings, inscriptions, and complex court rituals at least 1,000 years old. Dance has been a primary medium of prayer and prophecy, an instrument of kingship, the expression of colonial defiance, a vehicle of modern geo-politics, an object of the Khmer Rouge holocaust, and the refuge of many of its victims. In its performance, dance embodies the living chronicle of a people, transferred and enriched from one generation to the next.

In the last two years, Cambodia has experienced peace and stability after nearly a half-century of life-taking war and destruction. As in the past, the state of Cambodian dance is at once a measure of the country's contemporary circumstances and values, and an important element of its renewal.

Overview of the Modern Era

In the wake of independence in 1945, and the abdication of King Norodom Sihanouk 10 years later, the classical repertory moved from the court to the public arena. With this change, the arts became a reflection of the modern Cambodian state; the classical and folk repertoires were performed on stage together. A devastating civil war in the early 1970s was exacerbated by the Vietnam conflict (including America's covert bombing of eastern Cambodia for six months in 1973). From 1975–79, between one and two million people (20 to 25% of the country's population) died from starvation, disease, forced labor, or execution during the horrific four-year reign of the Khmer Rouge. Cities were emptied; traditional culture was to be eradicated. All performance, religious practice, education, and ritual were prohibited.

As vivid as the images of Vietnamese troops "liberating" Cambodia in January 1979 are the stories of the nearly immediate resumption of performances and training by surviving artists and teachers. The centrality of music, dance, theater, puppetry, poetry, and song to Cambodian culture was made evident, but so were its losses. By many estimates, 90% of Cambodia's artists died. Those who remained alive were scattered, disconnected and left with few resources to recreate their arts and their society. For a culture dependent on oral transmission, with many of its (already few) documents lost or destroyed, recovery was a slow and difficult process, one that is ongoing today.

When finally allowed to return to Phnom Penh, some of Cambodia's surviving artists quickly began performing and training. Other artists fled to refugee camps on the Thai border—whose populations welled to more than 300,000 before they were dismantled in the early 1990s as part of UN peace accords. They pieced together costumes, built makeshift stages, held classes, and staged performances of folk and classical dances that were attended by thousands. The Diaspora of refugees that followed created sizeable communities of Cambodians outside Southeast Asia for the first time. The United States alone is now home to more than 250,000 Cambodian-Americans, most of whom settled here during the last 20 years. Among these are artists who continue to teach and perform.

Historian David Chandler has proposed that transformation and syncretism are central themes of Cambodian history. Today, the 81-year-old Norodom Sihanouk, who traces his lineage and obligations to Cambodia's ages-old monarchy, has once again ascended the throne. The current government of the Kingdom of Cambodia is a parliamentary system led by a prime minister. After decades of isolation, Cambodia is once again focused outwardly and has established a formal working relationship with its neighbors. With the support of individuals and international

governmental bodies like the United Nations, Cambodia is striving to document, restore, and rebuild its cultural legacy as part of the country's renewal. The arts as practiced at home and abroad are integral to this survival and are once more both a catalyst and expression of Cambodia in the 21st century.

Khmer Music

Khmer music is integral to Cambodian life and culture. It is a significant component in religious and traditional ceremonies such as weddings or temple celebrations. The bas reliefs on the Angkor temples (9th–13th centuries), with their elaborate carvings depicting myths, gods, and aspects of daily life, include musical ensembles that are nearly identical to the ensembles performing in Cambodia today. Virtually every village in Cambodia possesses a music ensemble. This continuity is a testimony to the strength of this ancient tradition.

Khmer music consists of polyphonic stratification and is based predominantly on the pentatonic (five-tone) scale. It is built linearly, devoid of harmony in the Western sense. Musicians in an ensemble have a collective melody in mind that no single musician actually plays. Rather melody provides a kind of road map that directs the musicians to a common destination and serves as a guideline around which musical embellishment or ornamentation takes place. The drummer regulates the pace of the ensemble.

Cambodian music is part of an oral tradition in which the music is passed on directly from teacher to student from memory. Only during the last 20 years have musical pieces begun to be notated and otherwise recorded at the Royal University of Fine Arts.

There are many types of music ensembles in Cambodia today. The most prominent in this program is the pin peat, one of the oldest Khmer ensembles. In addition to accompanying the classical dance repertory, it is also used for masked plays, shadow puppet plays, and religious ceremonies.

The pin peat repertoire is known as phleng skor (drum music) or phleng laim (dance music). When accompanying dance, each musical piece is associated with a particular "action," with prescribed drum patterns supporting specific movements and/or phrases. This attribute can be seen most strongly in the Reamker, where the music supports the dynamic nuances of the story.

The pin peat ensemble consists of the following instruments: sralai (quadruple-reed oboe), roneat ek (xylophone), roneat dek (high-pitched metallophone), kong tauch (high-pitched circular frame gongs), kong thom (low-pitched circular frame gongs), chheung (small finger cymbals), sampho (small double-headed barrel drum), skor thom (large double-headed barrel drums), and chamrieng (vocals).

Of Names and Translations

The words 'Khmer' and 'Cambodian' are often used interchangeably, reflecting the different names ascribed to this geographic area and its people over the course of the region's long history. Cambodians speak the Khmer language, but Khmer people or Cambodian culture can often be cited as Cambodian people or Khmer culture.

When written or spoken, a person's family name precedes their first name. Also, the honorific is associated with a person's first name—e.g. Proeung Chhieng: Proeung is the surname, and Mr. Chhieng is the proper form of address.

When translated, the Khmer alphabet does not directly correspond to ours and English language spellings of many Khmer words have not yet been codified. For example, the word "temple" may be translated as vat or wat. Where there is general acceptance (though not always complete agreement), we have chosen the most common spelling—hence Angkor Wat. Other times, we have tried to approximate pronunciation.

Robam (sometimes also spelled robaim) is a general term for dance, so in this program, Robam Apsara might be translated as "Apsara Dance."

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Though few written records exist, current practices point to a centuries-long lineage of performing arts traditions, village and temple rites, and events in Cambodia. Arts instruction in what we think of as modern academic settings began in Cambodia in the early 20th century with the founding of the School of Arts in Phnom Penh in 1919.

In the 1950s, the Conservatory of Performing Arts (now the Department of Arts) was created. In 1965, King Norodom Sihanouk formally established the Royal University of Fine Arts. Increased emphasis was placed on fostering indigenous scholarship in the arts, and traditions of the court, the temple, and the village were brought together. This new model—a public affirmation of Cambodia's modern national identity—precipitated a decade-long period of growth, transforming how Khmer culture was conceived, created, and preserved.

All of this came to a halt when the University, along with every other educational, religious, and cultural institution, was closed by the Khmer Rouge in 1975, and Phnom Penh's inhabitants—including its artists—were dispersed under forced evacuation to the countryside.

In 1979, a handful of professional performers returned to Phnom Penh and immediately put out a call to all artists to return. Cambodia's remaining dancers and musicians responded. In 1980, professional artists reunited for the first time in emotional performances that were at once an agonizing recognition of the loss of life—so many were killed or missing—and a reaffirmation of identity. The School of Fine Arts reopened later that year.

In 1988, the School became the University of Fine Arts, attaining the status of the pre-Khmer Rouge conservatory. In 1990, members of the University toured to the USA, in the first large-scale tour of work from Cambodia to this country since 1971. In 1993, the University was renamed the Royal University of Fine Arts.

Today, RUFA and the Department of Arts are primary repositories of Khmer culture. While the two institutions often share personnel and may participate in joint projects and tours, RUFA is distinguished by its educational mission. Both institutions are administered by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, under the direction of HRH Princess Buppha Devi, one of the most important dancers of her generation.

RUFA's colleges of archeology, architecture, plastic arts, music, and choreographic arts issue undergraduate degrees. Its college of choreographic arts is the umbrella for dance, theater, and circus arts majors. Continuing the history of conservatory training, dancers as young as eight years of age begin their studies in the time-honored traditions of the form, integrated into a program of academic study.

The process of reconstruction continues to be arduous. Though much has been recovered during the last 20 years, much work remains to be done. Documentation of Khmer dance had been minimal, and many of the few written records, photographs, and films that had existed were lost during the Khmer Rouge period. The transmission of knowledge from teacher to student that is the basis of training, interpretation, and creation has taken on added significance and urgency. "The past is a crucial link to the present and the well-spring of our future," says Proeung Chhieng, vice rector and dean of choreographic arts at the Royal University of Fine Arts and artistic director of the 2001 tour.

Ranging in age from 18 to 71, the project's 42 company members frame the face of today's Cambodia. Together they embody decades of knowledge about Khmer performance practice and the future of this world-renowned culture.

The 22 classical dancers, seven folk dancers, six musicians, three singers, two costumers, and two staff members participating in the current tour hail from the capital city of Phnom Penh and five of the 20 provinces—Kandal, Kompong Chhnang, Takeo, Kompong Thom, and Kompong Speu.

Eight of the dancers were born after the reign of the Khmer Rouge. Most performers, like Him Nala, entered RUFA as students in the 1960s and early '70s, becoming teachers or professional dancers with the Department of Arts before they were forced into hiding or exile. An excerpt from Nguon Sam Ath's biography offers an all-too-common reflection of that period:

1968–75	Member of Department of Arts
1975–79	Peasant during Pol Pot
1979–80	Dance instructor in Battambang
1981–90	Member of Department of Arts
1991–92	Research Department at the Ministry of Culture
1993–present	Teacher, RUFA

Those touring to the United States in 2001 have performed in Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, the former Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Russia/USSR, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam.

Proeung Chhieng (artistic director) is vice rector and dean of choreographic arts at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. Born in 1949, Chhieng trained from age seven in the role of Hanuman, the white monkey general in the Reamker and was a principal dancer with the Royal Cambodian Ballet. In North Korea on a scholarship when the Khmer Rouge assumed power in 1975, he chose to return to Cambodia and survived by hiding his identity. In 1979, he and surviving colleagues re-established RUFA as a central site for communications and education for the performing arts. Chhieng has created links to the refugee communities in Thailand, the United States, and Europe, and guided the

efforts to rebuild a fragmented and largely undocumented repertory. During the last 20 years, he has organized performance tours throughout the world (including the last American tour in 1990), arranged for foreign scholars to teach and carry out research, and represented Cambodia at a number of important international conferences, symposia, and workshops, furthering his mission to communicate the meaning and importance of Cambodian dance. Chhieng is the co-director of the Cambodian Arts Mentorship Program, a teaching and documentation program administered by the Asian Cultural Council. He is senior consultant to the Japan Foundation-funded Dance Notation Project, and an advisor to Cambodia's minister of culture. He received the John D. Rockefeller III Award, of the Asian Cultural Council, for his significant contributions to the study, understanding, and practice of Cambodia's performing arts.

Fred Frumberg (production coordinator), after graduating in 1981 from Temple University, worked for four years as an opera stage manager in San Francisco, St. Louis, Spoleto USA, San Diego, and at the Komische Oper in the former East Berlin. He later became an assistant stage director, working for two seasons at the Netherlands Opera in Amsterdam, and worked as a freelance assistant with such directors as Deborah Warner and Francesca Zambello in San Francisco, Seattle, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Los Angeles, Glyndebourne, and Hong Kong. In 1987, Frumberg began his seven-year collaboration with Peter Sellars as an assistant director and assistant line producer on numerous opera, theater, and video projects throughout Europe and the United States. In 1994, he assumed a full-time position at the Paris National Opera as head of the stage directing department. In the spring of 1997, Frumberg resigned from that position and moved to Cambodia as a Peace Corps/UN Volunteer to assist, in collaboration with UNESCO and the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, in the revival and preservation of Cambodian performing arts. This continues to be his primary activity, while also developing cross cultural projects with regional partners in Southeast Asia and the United States.

Toni Shapiro-Phim (project scholar) is a dance ethnologist and anthropologist specializing in the performing arts of Southeast Asia. She received her PhD in cultural anthropology from Cornell University in 1994. During her three years of initial fieldwork in Cambodia (1990–93), her research focused on the relationship between dance and war, and on the lives of Cambodia's dancers. She has returned to Cambodia often, several times as a teacher-trainer for the faculty of performing arts at the Royal University of Fine Arts. She has written articles for magazines, journals, and encyclopedias about many aspects of the performing arts in Cambodia, and is co-author of *Dance in Cambodia* (Oxford University Press, 1999). Tapes she developed from the video archive of Cambodian dance are in research collections in Hawaii and New York. She has designed and coordinated public arts programs and has taught classes on the anthropology of dance, and on aesthetics and terror in Southeast Asia.

Clifton Taylor's (production and lighting designer) lighting designs are in the repertoires of American Ballet Theatre, Scottish National Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Houston Ballet, Washington Ballet, Maggio Danza in Florence (Italy), Sardono Dance Theatre of Indonesia, and the Ballet Company of Rio de Janeiro, among many others. Other recent work includes the United States tours of *Forgiveness*, a full-length theater work by Chen Shi-Zheng for the Asia Society, new works for Monte/ Brown Dance, Buglisi/Foreman Dance, and the Juilliard School's Dance Division. He has designed for opera and theater companies including the New York City Opera/ National Company, American Conservatory Theater (San Francisco), Dallas Theater Center, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Playhouse (resident lighting designer), the Pasadena Playhouse, and ACT (Seattle). With these and other companies, he has traveled extensively throughout Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

New England Foundation for the Arts (producer) was established in 1976 by a group of six state arts agencies, and "connects the people of New England with the power of art to improve our lives and shape our communities." Through its extensive funding, advocacy, and networking efforts, NEFA promotes the creation and presentation of the full range of artistic expression. NEFA celebrates New England and its characteristic values while playing a national role by distributing model programs, supporting international cultural exchange, and advocating access to the arts for everyone.

Lisa Booth Management, Inc. (producer) is a New York City-based firm that initiates, produces, and manages performing arts projects in conjunction with artists, producers, and presenting organizations. Specializing in contemporary theater, dance, and performance, activities include touring American artists worldwide, producing North American tours for foreign artists, general managing of performance seasons, and creating special projects and events. Since 1984, LBMI projects have taken place in more than 300 cities in 45 states and 20 countries. Recent projects include US national tours of *Les Colporteurs* (France), *Teatro Hugo & Ines* (Peru/Bosnia), *Ratan Thiyam's Chorus Repertory Theatre* (with Asia Society), *Children of Uganda* (2000 and 2002), and the mainland tour of Hawaii's *Halau*

O Kekuhi. LBMI created and general manages the On Tour program of the Henson International Festival of Puppet Theater, introducing communities around the nation to the best in contemporary puppetry from around the world since 1994. LBMI is the exclusive touring representative for Doug Varone and Dancers, JAZZDANCE by Danny Buraczski, Reno, and Robert Post. Upcoming projects include Obon, a new puppet theater work by Ping Chong, and the United States tours of Les Arts Sauts and Compagnie Jerome Thomas from France.

Asia Society (producer) is America's leading institution dedicated to fostering understanding of Asia and communication between Americans and the peoples of Asia and the Pacific. A nonprofit, nonpartisan educational institution, the Asia Society presents a wide range of programs including major art exhibitions, media programs, international conferences and lectures, and initiatives to improve elementary and secondary education about Asia. Asia Society's performing arts activities include producing and presenting work in New York and on tour in the USA. Recent projects include presentations of Iranian singer Sharam Nazeri, and traditional Mongolian musicians Altai Hungai. Contemporary theater work includes producing and touring Forgiveness by Chen Shi-Zheng, Akira Matsui, and Eve Beglarian; the national tour of Ratan Thiyam's Chorus Repertory Theatre (with Lisa Booth Management) and Cloudgate Dance Theatre of Taiwan. Upcoming projects include the world premiere of Floating Box: A Story in Chinatown by Jason Hwang and Catherine Filloux; and Wenji, by Bun-Ching Lam and Xu Ying. The Asia Society is headquartered in New York City, with regional centers in Washington, DC, Houston, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and Melbourne, Australia, and representative offices in San Francisco, Seattle, Manila, and Shanghai.

Dance, the Spirit of Cambodia
2001 USA Tour

For additional information about the current tour, including a complete performance calendar, essays, and a photo and video gallery, visit www.asiasource.org/cambodia. You may also contact Lisa Booth Management, Inc.: artslbmi@msn.com; tel: 212.921.2114.

The New England Foundation for the Arts has established the Fund for Cambodian Culture, dedicated to the ongoing study, performance, and preservation of Cambodian performing arts on behalf of the Royal University of Fine Arts and its partners in Cambodia and the United States. Your interest and support are welcome. For additional information, visit www.nefa.org or call 617.951.0010.

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Program notes by Deirdre Valente with
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Credits

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