



ក្រុមទាំងអង្គ
ANGKOR

Dance Troupe

A Celebration of Cambodian Classical and Folk Dance

ARTIST DIRECTOR DANCE COORDINATORS GENERAL MANAGER

Mrs. Phousita Serey Huy Mr. Tim Chan Thou Ms. Ruth Page
Mr. Sokheoun Sim

ARTISTS/PERFORMERS

Miss Akara Im	Miss Chenda Ty	Mr. Pov Sath
Miss Linda C. Thou	Miss Sophannary Khem	Mr. Samuth Koam
Miss Sopharl Ngim	Miss Sophannarin Khem	Mr. Boo Ouch
Miss Rotana C. Thou	Mr. Savann Leng	Mr. Rothana Yok
Miss Vanrotha Im	Mr. Rotha Yok	Mr. Sochenda Uch
Miss Choumnith Sath	Mr. Samnang Hor	Mr. Tola Sok
	Mr. Khoeun Pring	

SPECIAL GUESTS

Mrs. Sokhanarith Moeur	Miss Leakhena Moeur	Mr. Phan Phoung
Mrs. Somaly Hay	Miss Rachana Khiev	Mr. Tonara Hing
Mrs. Sopheap Sim	Miss Rith Malay Hay	Ms. Sophana Keth
	Ms. Maly Ouk	

COSTUMERS/DRESSERS

Ms. Phalik Ting Mrs. Kolab Thou

STAGE/SOUND/LIGHTING/PRESENTER COORDINATORS

Mr. Nissay Liek	Mr. Chhan D. Touch	Mr. Scott Glidden
Mr. Tim Chan Chou	Ms. Carol Keirstead	Ms. Gloria Polites

THE PROGRAM

Welcoming Remarks

Lowell Mayor Edward Caulfield
State Representative Thomas Golden

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Apsara Dance | Classical |
| 2. | The Coconut Shell Dance | Folk |
| 3. | Expression of Sentiment Dance | Classical |
| 4. | The Butterfly Dance | Folk |
| 5. | The Good Crops Dance | Folk |
| 6. | Moni Mekhala Dance | Classical |
| 15-Minute Intermission | | |
| 7. | Khen Dance | Folk |
| 8. | Chhoy Chhay Dance | Classical |
| 9. | The Peacock of Pailin Dance | Folk |
| 10. | Tep Monorom Dance | Classical |
| 11. | Pestle Dance | Folk |
| 12. | Chhay Yam Dance | Folk |

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ក្រុមរបាំអង្គរ

Angkor Dance Troupe, Inc.

History and Background

Like all traditional arts, Cambodian classical and folk dance has been passed down from one generation to the next. Since the Angkor Era, Cambodian dancers and musicians have preserved, cherished, and celebrated their art.

The Angkor Dance Troupe was formed in 1986 in Lowell, MA by two teachers and a handful of dancers who learned traditional Cambodian Dance in refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border. Between 1975 and 1979, when Pol Pot and the Khmer

For Cambodians, art is the core of life, combining entertainment, tradition, religion, and social cohesion.

Rouge controlled Cambodia, many dancers and musicians perished or fled the country. It was in the camps and later in places like Lowell and at the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh that traditional Cambodian dance was painstakingly resurrected.

Today, dance has become one of the primary ways that Cambodians, split by politics and war, identify a common culture. For Cambodians, art is the core of life, combining entertainment, tradition, religion, and social cohesion. Wherever Cambodians live, so do the traditions of practicing, performing, and passing on the culture.

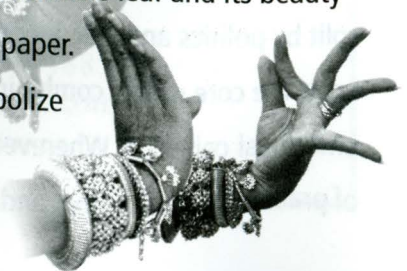
Classical Dance



Cambodian classical dance has been associated with the court of Cambodia for more than one thousand years. During the great Angkor civilization, the dancers of the Khmer royal ballet made offerings while performing during rituals and ceremonies before sacred idols.

In court dance, we see highly-stylized positions in concert with gentle movements. Gestures are strictly defined and distinguished by the intricacy of hand positions.

Each of these gestures has a specific meaning, often relating to nature. For example "Lea" can denote a leaf, but it can also mean "to open." (See right hand in photo below.) Depending on its context within the dance, Lea can represent the leaf and its beauty or the opening of a hand or a piece of paper. "Cheep" (left hand in photo) can symbolize a flower or it can mean to fold into small pleats.



Folk dance is rooted in rural Cambodia and reflects the life and spirit of peasants. Throughout Cambodia, after the harvest is over, it is time for music, song, and dance. Dance motifs are commonly based on local legends and inspired by themes of nature as well as the ceremonies, customs, and rituals of everyday life. Just as court dance is ruled by a strict form and a prescribed language of movement, folk dance is spontaneous, created for emotional expressions.

The folk dances performed by the Angkor Dance Troupe were refined by the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. Researchers collected dances and music from all over the country and then choreographed dances that were suited to staged performances.

Folk Dance



A Leader in Traditional Cambodian Dance

The mission of the Angkor Dance Troupe is to preserve and develop the traditions of Cambodian performing arts, to promote an understanding and appreciation of Cambodian culture, and to provide a positive social, cultural, and recreational outlet for Cambodian youth.

The Angkor Dance Troupe is recognized throughout New England as a leading Cambodian folk and classical dance ensemble.

The Troupe's artistic director, **Phousita S. Huy** is one of the most-respected master teachers of Cambodian dance in the U.S.

She is a recently-emigrated star performer from the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, which is considered the cultural source and artistic standard bearer of Cambodian performing arts. Troupe coordinator and cofounder **Tim Chan Thou** was trained and certified as a teacher of Cambodian traditional dance from Khao-I-Dang and Philippine Refugee Centers.



Phousita S. Huy, Artistic Director for the Angkor Dance Troupe, is a recently-emigrated star performer from the University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Phalik Ting (left) and Thida Loeung at a recent performance in Boston.



The Angkor Dance Troupe is recognized throughout New England as a leading Cambodian Classical and Folk Dance Ensemble.

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An Extensive Collection of Authentic Costumes

The Dance Troupe has assembled an extensive collection of authentic costumes, dance materials, artifacts, and documentation. The Troupe's principal costumer, **Phalik Ting**, learned Khmer classical dance in Camp Sakeo, Thailand. Costumers from the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh have also made costumes for the Troupe.



Preparing for a performance can take several hours. Many Cambodian dance costumes are so intricate and close-fitting that dancers have to be sewn into them before performances.

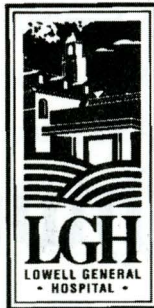
Above - Angkor Dance Troupe member Akara Im assists Linda Thou with her costume.

Right - Vanrotha Im gets help with her costume before performing the Coconut Dance.



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Members of the Angkor Dance Troupe perform the classical dance "Tep Monorum" at First Night Boston in December 1996.

The Angkor Dance Troupe has participated in workshops at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and is listed on the Touring Roster for the New England Foundation for the Arts. The Troupe is routinely invited to perform at prestigious events, such as Boston's First Night celebration at the Wang Center and the Boston Ballet. Other performance venues have included the National and Lowell Folk Festivals, the Boston Public Library, the Peabody Museum, the Peterborough NH Town House, the University of Massachusetts - Lowell and Amherst campuses, the Annual City of Fall River Cambodian Celebration, and the Children's Museum.

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Carrying on the Tradition

Over a dozen performances and public events have been scheduled to date in 1997, including workshops and residency programs in several public schools. Instructor Tim Chan Thou believes teaching in the schools is vitally important. "This is how we plant the seeds of interest in traditional culture," said Thou. "This is how we develop in young people an appreciation for our heritage, and ultimately it's our best hope to keep Cambodian dance alive."



Members of the Angkor Dance Troupe rehearse at the Madelon Curtis Dance Studio in downtown Lowell.

The Troupe holds weekly rehearsals. For four hours every Sunday, members gather to practice. The method of teaching is practiced as it has been done traditionally, by watching, imitation, and assistance from teachers to achieve the correct postures and movement.

Through the dance instruction, students learn about Cambodian culture. From the folk dances, they learn about geography and a daily life in Cambodia that they have never experienced. From the classical or court dances they experience revered ancient traditions.



Cambodian tradition prescribes a particular relationship between student and teacher, a relationship that is repeated in the relationships of children to parents, and young people to elders. Students are respectful of teachers and of the knowledge they possess. They appreciate the chance to learn and understand their responsibility for carrying on their culture.

Four young members of the Angkor Dance Troupe after a performance of Tivea Propey, a dance originally performed in honor of Children's Day in Cambodia.



*Best Wishes to the
Angkor Dance Troupe*

Donald E. Pierson, Dean
College of Education
University of Massachusetts Lowell



**Members of the Angkor Dance Troupe
at a recent performance.**

From left: Chhan D. Touch, Khoeun Pring, Phalik Ting, George Chigas, Thida Loeung, Linda Thou, Sochenda Uch, Vanlina Im, Rothana Yok, Pov Sath, Boo Ouch, Rotana Thou, Vanrotha Im, Sophannary Khem, Sophannarin Khem, Harlen Hor, Soparl Ngin, Samnang Hor, Akara Im, Andeth Vann, Phousita Serey Huy, Chenda Ty, Sarith Heng, Sokhoeum Sim, Maliny Pen, Maliny Khem, Elizabeth Yim, Choumnith Sath. Not pictured: Tim Chan Thou, Savann Leng, Rotha Yok, Tola Sok, Samuth Koam.

Happy New Year
to the Cambodian Community
Carole Matthews

We would like to honor and thank Thoeun (Tim) Thou and Kolab Yin for their dedication to continuing the tradition of Cambodian dance.



Many people have made valuable contributions to the Angkor Dance Troupe, but without the sustained commitment of Thoeun and Kolab over the past decade, the Troupe would not have survived.

Despite the difficulties and hardships, they have never given up in their belief that Cambodian traditional dance has meaning and value for future generations.

With respect and appreciation, we give them our thanks.

**យើងខ្ញុំសូមផ្តល់នូវកិត្តិយសនិងខ្លែងអំណរអរគុណចល់ លោកគូ ចាន់ឡែន និង
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Apsara Dance

Apsara is a central symbol of Cambodian culture. In the great Angkor civilization, the beautiful celestial dancers of the temple represented the prayers and linked the human world to omnipotent deities. Hundreds of bas-relief Apsara carvings can still be seen on the walls of Cambodia's national treasure, the temples of Angkor Wat.

The Apsara Dance is based on the Angkor Wat sculptures. It is a dance for special occasions, originally performed only for the royal families of Cambodia. In the dance, we see Mera, dressed in white for purity, dancing in her garden with her handmaidens, also Apsaras. The golden flowers they carry symbolize the happiness and well-being of Cambodian people.



The Coconut Shell Dance

Coconut trees are a main agricultural resource in Cambodia. They provide sustenance to Khmer farmers and are abundant in villages. Inspired by a popular game called *Coconut Shell*, the Coconut Dance originated in the province of Svay Rieny, the eastern part of Cambodia. In its original form, it was a one-man show. In the modern-day dance, an equal number of male and female dancers performs the dance, signifying friendship and courtship.



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Good Crops Dance

This folk dance comes from a minority tribe called Phnornng that lives in the hilly plateaus and forests of the Mundulkiri and Tarankiri provinces of Cambodia. The Good Crops dance depicts a delightful episode of choosing the fields for crops. The dance, through its movements and gesture, celebrates the hope for a productive harvest.

Expression of Sentiment Dance

Choreographed by the late dance master Chea Samy, this dance was originally created to provide dance students with a wide range of expressions and sentiments. It has also been performed by professional dancers as an addition to their repertoire of court dances. The theme depicts courting actions and, as it concludes, the sadness of two lovers separated.



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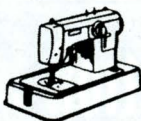
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The Butterfly Dance

In Cambodia, a young Khmer hunter captures a butterfly, intrigued by its color and motion. But when the hapless helpless creature begs for mercy, he lets it go. And so the Butterfly Dance symbolizes both the curiosity and the compassion of Cambodian people. The graceful gestures and polite manner. The willingness to always help and support one another. And above all, the desire to live in peace and harmony.

Moni Mekhala Dance

According to Cambodian legend, thunder and lightning result from the eternal battle between the Goddess Moni Mekhala and her adversary, the storm demon Ream Eyso. One of the most sacred dances in the Cambodian classical repertory, Moni Mekhala is still performed as a ceremony to pray for rain.

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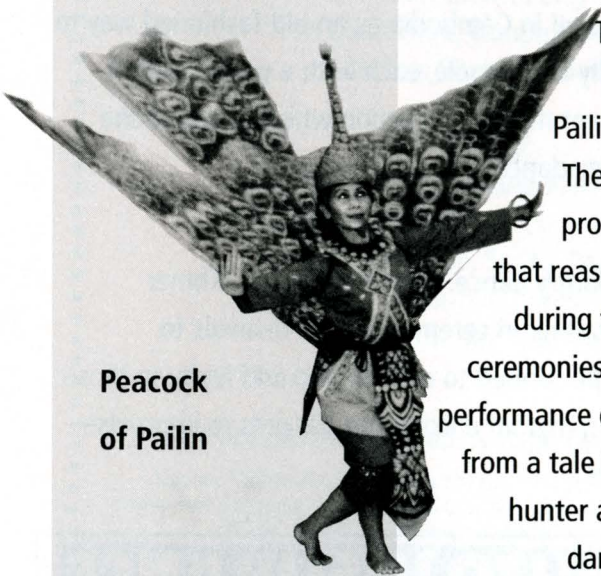
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Khen Dance

This is a dance of courtship. In a region of Cambodia along the border with Lao, people frequently play an instrument called the khen or mouth organ. In this dance, men play the mouth organs to serenade women. Not able to resist, the ladies touch the flowers hanging from the khen and fall in love.

Chhouy Chhay Dance

Chhouy Chhay is the name of an adolescent princess dancer with perfect beauty in all aspects. Her dance, voice, figure, and attitude are rare and unmatched in the world. This choreography demonstrates her delicate and gentle dance during her promenade in the forest.



**Peacock
of Pailin**

The peacock is a symbol of happiness in the region of Pailin, which borders Thailand. The dance is thought to bring prosperity to villagers and for that reason the dance is performed during the New Year and at other ceremonies and festivals. The original performance of this dance was adapted from a tale involving a peacock and a hunter and was danced with both dancing and chasing actions.

When it was brought to the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, some of the original elements were eliminated and new elements added. The theme was changed and now the dance embodies courtship.

Tep Monorum Dance

This dance, often considered the most beautiful in the classical repertory, embodies the well being, friendship, and prosperity of Cambodian people.

Happy New Year
to the Cambodian Community
from
Kris Niccoli

The Pestle Dance

The Pestle Dance is a popular Khmer folk dance that originated in Siem Riep Province. It is a dance that celebrates the harvest. The pestle and mortar are used in Cambodia as an old-fashioned way to mill rice paddies. Usually two people, each with a pestle, pound alternatively in a constant rhythm, an action which provided the basis for the modern day dance.

Chhay Yam Dance

Chhayam is a comic country dance. After the harvest, Khmer peasants and farmers gather in ceremonies and festivals to celebrate. Chhayam is performed to enliven and add levity to these celebrations. Its exciting rhythm encourages dancers to improvise their steps and gestures.



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Sources: "Cambodia's Royal Dance," by Eileen Blumenthal, *Natural History* 4/89
Khmer Folk Dance by Sam-Ang Sam & Chan Moly Sam, Khmer Studies Institute Inc., 1987
Khmer Songbook, Forward by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, 1992
The Classical Dance Company of Cambodia, Sam-Ang Sam, Music Director
"An Introduction to Khmer Traditional Dance" by Huy Serey Phousita, Seoul, 1995

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please contact: Ruth Page, General Manager (508) 441-1750**

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