

Asian Arts & Culture Program at the Fine Arts Center

UMassAmherst

For Immediate Release

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WHAT: **Cambodia Remembered: Angkor Dance & Film**

WHEN: **Sunday, November 15 at 3 PM**

WHERE: **Bowker Auditorium, UMass Amherst**

TICKETS: **Fine Arts Center Box Office 545-2511/ 1-800-999-UMAS**

“A testament to the resiliency of the Cambodian people”...

Join the Asian Arts & Culture Program at the Fine Arts Center at UMASS in welcoming **Angkor Dance Company** in a special matinee performance on **Sunday November 15 at 3PM at Bowker Auditorium**. This special event includes the screening of the documentary film **Monkey Dance** by Julie Mallozzi. There will be a post screening discussion with the filmmaker and the three Cambodians profiled in the film. Reserve tickets are \$20 and \$15. Call the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS or online at www.umasstix.com.

The dance, drama, and music prominent in Khmer society, were nearly wiped out when the Khmer Rouge took control of Cambodia in the 1970's. Artists were a deliberate target for extinction in that period. More than 90% perished or fled the country. Today, as Cambodians around the world rebuild their culture, people see the revival of their traditional music and dance as a testimony to the endurance of their tradition and culture.

In 1986, the Angkor Dance Troupe was formed in Lowell by two dance teachers and a handful of dancers. They had learned traditional Cambodian dance in the Thai refugee camps. When the group arrived in Massachusetts, they brought with them a passion to continue the arts. By practicing, performing and teaching others, the artists sought to preserve the art form for future

generations of Cambodians. Today, with almost a 100 dancers, ranging in ages from 5 to 24, the Angkor Dance Troupe is one of the most respected Cambodian dance ensembles in the country.

The afternoon's concert will highlight some of the favorite dances of the Angkor Dance Company repertoire. The ***Blessing*** dance will be performed at the beginning to remove bad spirits and to bless the space will be followed by the ***Coconut*** dance of courtship and friendship. The ***Apsara*** dance recalls the beauty and grace of celestial dancers from a shared ancient Hindu tradition. The bas relief sculptures of dancers in the Angkor Vat temples glorify the ritual and formal movement of Cambodian classical tradition. The program includes the popular dance of the fight between the goddess ***Moni Mekhala*** and the giant ***Ream Eyso*** and concludes with ***Sva Pol*** (monkey dance). This absolute crowd pleaser is performed with an American touch of break and hip-hop moves but with traditional masks and costumes.

Looking back and forward, the revival of the arts of Cambodia is a testament to the resiliency of its people and their strength to survive the years of genocide and be able to recreate and maintain their arts and traditions in countries outside of their own. Once reserved exclusively for Cambodia's elite, classical dance is now performed for audiences around the world and has become a central symbol of the beauty and spirituality of Cambodian culture.

Please join us for these two exceptional events that honor the Cambodian arts while reflecting on issues of cultural resettlement of the Cambodian youth.

Please see our website at www.fineartscenter.com/asian for additional information. Tickets available online: www.fineartscenter.com or by calling 1-800-999-UMAS or 413-545-2511. Downloadable high resolution photos and electronic versions of press releases for performance events are available at: <http://www.umass.edu/fac/asian/press.html>.

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