



Richard K. and Nancy L. Donahue Charitable Foundation  
Presents

# PREAH THOUNG NEANG NEAK

The Origin of Cambodian Wedding



[www.angkordance.org](http://www.angkordance.org)



# THANK YOU

The Board of Directors and Staff of the Angkor Dance Troupe welcome you to this performance of Preah Thoung Neang Neak. We are excited to premiere this year's residency at the Cyrus W. Irish Auditorium, located within Lowell High School.

The Angkor Dance Troupe was formed over thirty years ago with the vision to preserve and develop the Cambodian performing arts, traditions that were almost completely wiped out during the Khmer Rouge genocide. For a community struggling to put down roots in a new homeland, Cambodian dance provides a poignant reminder of the beauty and spirituality of our culture and helps us build a more stable foundation for our children.

As the heart and soul of the Cambodian American community in Lowell, the Angkor Dance Troupe has served as a foundation and voice of its cherished cultural traditions. The Troupe is nationally recognized as one of the most accomplished and experienced traditional Cambodian arts ensembles in the United States and has received recognition from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the National Endowment of the Arts, and the White House.

Please enjoy the show!

Board of Directors and Staff of Angkor Dance Troupe

Tim Thou  
Co-Founder

Phousita Huy  
Artistic Director

Dahvy Tran  
Executive Director

Michael Conway  
President

# PROGRAM



## **Preah Thong Neang Neak Program**

*(Based on a Traditional Cambodian Folktale)*

The Angkor Dance Troupe is proud to present excerpts from the story of Preah Thong Neang Neak, one of the oldest stories in the Cambodian Classical dance repertoire and the most elaborate staging of all dance dramas during the King Monivong regime. In October 1931, this dance drama was presented to the visiting French Minister of the colonies, Paul Reynaud. Preah Thong Neang Neak was readapted by Her Royal Highness (HRH) Norodom Bopha Deva in order to preserve this important historical custom. Today's traditional Cambodian wedding ceremonies are based off the main characters from the story Preah Thong Neang Neak.

### **ACT I**

Scene 1: Preah Thong's Journey to the Island of Tok Thlok

Scene 2: Into the Deep Sea with Neang Neak

Scene 3: Under the Warm Sunset in the Garden of Paradise

Scene 4: Preah Thong and Neang Neak Fall in Love

### **INTERMISSION**

### **ACT II**

Scene 1: The Royal Invitation  
to the Wedding

Scene 2: Robam Tep Monorom



*Channa Sath as Neang Neak*

# GESTURES AND EXPRESSION

Dance gestures and expressions used in Preah Thung Neang Neak represent the cycle of nature:



Flower



Leaf



Fruit



Ripe Fruit



Falling Fruit/Flower



To Plant



Grow/Growth



Branch



Flower Bud



Fruit Bud



Kiss



Love



Shy

# ACT I

The excerpt begins after Preah Thoung was exiled from the Indian Kingdom and victors against Assachay, another evil Prince, in battle. His soldiers have prepared their ships for a long journey through the sea.



*Neang Neak and Preah Thoung portrayed by Channa Sath and Virginia Prak*

## **Scene 1: Preah Thoung Journey to the Island of Tok Thlok**

Preah Thoung and his soldiers crash onto the shores of an unknown island. After exploring the land, he claims the island as The Kingdom of Tok Thlok.

## **Scene 2: Into the Deep Sea with Neang Neak**

As we enter the alluring sea of the Naga Serpent Kingdom, we encounter stone crabs, giant sea prawns, sea horses, and a school of fish.

The stone crabs crawl through the fine sea sand and the prawns jump from left to right, as the young seahorse is nipping on seaweed. The adoring scale of the school of fish accompany Her Royal Highness, Neang Neak.

## **Scene 3: Under the Warm Sunset in the Garden of Paradise**

The full moon attracts all kinds of creatures and animals of the Naga Kingdom to the sea shore. Her Royal Highness, Neang Neak, transcends into human form while her maids bathe her in the warm ocean water and the seaweed arises above the seashore.

As Preah Thoung awakens from his nap under the “thlok” tree, the aroma of the seaweed flowers attracts Preah Thoung into Neang Neak's realm, the Garden of Paradise, where he is captivated by Neang Neak's beauty.

## **Scene 4: Preah Thoung and Neang Neak Fall in Love**

Preah Thoung meets Neang Neak and is mesmerized by her beauty. He professes his love to her and they both fall deep in love. Neang Neak explains to Preah Thoung how he has to travel across land and sea to seek permission from the Naga King and Queen for her hand in marriage.

# **INTERMISSION**

## ACT II

You are cordially invited to the wedding of Preah Thoung and Neang Neak!



*Neang Neak and Preah Thoung portrayed by Channa Sath and Sophy Leng*

### **Scene 1: The Royal Invitation to the Wedding**

The wedding procession takes place in the Naga Kingdom. Preah Thoung has his royal entourage carry gifts that he will present to the Naga King and Queen which include gold, silver, pearls, silk, and other fine goods.

The sound of the gong alerts the guests that the royal family is entering the procession. As part of the wedding ceremony, the Naga King and Queen give their blessings to Preah Thoung and he is granted permission to open up the curtains to reveal Neang Neak.

Preah Thoung and Neang Neak offer their gratitude to the Naga King and Queen.

The King and Queen tie red bands to their wrists meaning, “*do not separate and do not part away.*” Preah Thoung holds on to Neang Neak's golden “sbai” (the tail of the Neang Neak's garment) in order to pass through the waves and enter the Kingdom of the Naga.

### **Scene 2: Robam Tep Monorom**

A classical dance performed by Gods and Goddesses, who travel from heaven to earth, to celebrate with Preah Thoung and Neang Neak.

Cambodian classical dance has been connected to the sacred rituals of Cambodia for more than 1000 years. This type of dance is used to perform in Cambodia's great temples in ceremonies to appease the Gods and, more recently, for the King and his family in the royal Court – classical dance is sometimes called court dance or royal ballet. There was a time classical dances were performed only for royalty but today these dances are performed for audiences around the world and have come to be seen as a symbol of the beauty and complexity of Cambodian culture.

This dance also provides an interesting study in the different dance roles of Cambodian classical dance. Classical dance has been historically a women's art form – even when dances have both male and female roles. It will be very clear to you which dancers are playing the male roles by their costumes. What's more subtle is how the gestures and the dance executes are different depending on the role of the dancer.

The words in the song represent harmonious union of the gods and goddesses expressed through dance:

*“When Gods and Goddesses  
Descend on Earth  
With joy to dance all day  
A Goddess chased most often flee  
An ardent God's embrace*

*The heavenly Maiden is beautiful  
She dances with harmonious grace  
In near embrace with the beloved  
But held back by a graceful hand  
Now circling and coiling  
The Prince and Princess dance joyously.”*



Angkor Dance Troupe, Inc.

ក្រុមចំរើន



ASPARA SPONSOR



*Richard K.*

*and*

*Nancy L. Donahue*

*Charitable Foundation*



SOVANN MACHA SPONSORS



Enterprise Bank  
is proud to support the

# Angkor Dance Troupe

as they celebrate their heritage and continually bind  
the immensely-diverse cultures of our community.

978-459-9000

**EB** Enterprise Bank  
CREATE SUCCESS

Member  
**FDIC**

EnterpriseBanking.com

**IT TAKES A TEAM  
TO BUILD A STRONG  
COMMUNITY**



Which is why we are proud to support the Angkor Dance Troupe.



**JEANNE D'ARC**  
CREDIT UNION

*we share a common thread*

JDCU.com | 978-452-5001

LOWELL | DRACUT | CHELMSFORD | TYNGSBORO | METHUEN | WESTFORD | NASHUA

Federally insured by NCUA up to \$250,000 | Shares and Deposits in excess of NCUA limits are fully insured by MSIC.  
Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union and the phrase We Share a Common Thread are federally registered trademarks owned by Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union.

## Carol & George Duncan

We are delighted to support and celebrate the Angkor Dance Troupe as it debuts their annual residency at the Merrimack Repertory Theatre and continues to connect communities with the preservation and innovation of their rich culture.

FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS



CENTER FOR  
ASIAN  
AMERICAN  
STUDIES



GALLAGHER & CAVANAUGH LLP  
COUNSELLORS AT LAW



**CONWAY**

**INSURANCE AGENCY**



# FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS



**MKtix.com**

Meerkat Technology

**YOUR LOCAL  
ONE STOP EVENTS  
TICKET SHOP**



**CONCERTS  
PLAYS  
CLASSES**

**TROLLEYS  
TOURS  
DONATIONS**

**& MORE!**

Visit our site today to browse  
for events or *list your own!*

[www.MKtix.com](http://www.MKtix.com)



# STORY



## Preah Thoung Neang Neak

Long ago in Southeast Asia, there was a Prince named Preah Thoung who had been exiled from the Indian Kingdom. He was forced onto a large ship with no destination, accompanied by guards, servants, and maids. The ship reached a small island with large trees called Dalhm Kok Tlork. The Prince witnessed Neang Neak, a mermaid, playing along the shore with her maids and decided to join them. Her beauty overtook him and they immediately fell in love.

After much time together, Neang Neak makes her way back to her home kingdom underwater to ask her parents' permission to marry the Prince, a human.

In order for Preah Thoung to visit her parents, he has to hold on to her Sbai (scarf) to travel down into the magical underwater kingdom. Neang Neak's parents approve of the marriage and bless their daughter and Prince Thoung with the inheritance of the island of Kampuchea, known today as the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Today, this story represents the origin of the Cambodian wedding.



# ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS

## Masters and Teachers

Artistic Director and Master Teacher – Phousita Huy

Assistant Artistic Director – Channa Sath

Master Teacher Kimhan Meas

Master Teacher Phirum Meas

Master Teacher Sophea Chamroeunnop

Master Teacher Pech Heung

## Supporting Teachers

Master Teacher Chamroeun Sdeoung



*(From left) Principal Dancers Virginia Prak, Channa Sath, and Sophy Leng with Angkor Dance Troupe Founder, Tim Thou and Artistic Director and Master Teacher, Phousity Huy*

# ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS



## Performers

Monique An

Peter Chea\*\*

Kacee Chhem

Cheymony Fennell\*

Diana Heung

Diandra Heung

Veesoth Hor

Khakhada Horn\*

Chelsey Khe

Theary Khem

Kaila Kim-Muangvong

Jaren Kong

Khyla Lach

Wealthy Lay

Sophy Leng\*

Sonisai Loeung Rinehart

Kelly Ly\*\*

Curtis Mai\*\*

Salena Mam

Felicity Moon

Nadia Heng Noeuk\*

Asha Nicholas

Irene Nop

Angellina Oeur

Madalyna Oeur

Poutda Pech

Victoria Phan\*\*

Rancia Phin\*

Vila Phommasith

Virginia Prak\*

Channa Sath\*

Stephanie Seng\*

Antonio Schaefer

Tatiana Shaefer

Roselynn Soung\*\*

Julie Sok

Paulina Srey\*

Vituu Touch\*\*

Daisy Var

Peter Veth\*

Judith Wilson

Jarronai Yary

Phalkun Yary

Sambo Yoeun

*\*Principal Dancers*

*\*\*Junior Instructors/Assistants*



# ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS

## **Stage/Production Support**

Emaly Horn  
Roselynn Soung  
Khakhada Horn  
Channa Sath  
Peter Veth

## **Costume/Makeup/Hair Support**

Kolab Thou  
Chenda Wilson  
Peter Veth  
Channa Sath  
Roselynn Suong  
Peter Chea  
Sokhoeun Sok  
Sokha Prak  
Sophol Moeun

## **Multimedia Support**

Jim Higgins  
Tim Thou  
Peter Veth  
Kalya Iek

## **Program Design & Support**

Chummeng Soun  
Jim Higgins  
OwlStamp Visual Solutions

## **Sound and Lighting Setup Team**

David Gregory  
Kevin Reilly  
Tim Thou  
Peter Veth  
Chummeng Suon  
Kimhan Meas  
Chamroeun Sdoeung

# LEADERSHIP AND STAFF



## **Advisory Board**

Celeste Bernardo  
Adrien Bisson  
Jim Conlon  
Nancy Donahue  
Carol Duncan  
Robert Farrant

Michael Gallagher  
Vanna Howard  
Joe Hungler  
Felicia Sullivan  
Sophy Theam  
Jim Wilde

## **Board of Directors**

Michael Conway, President  
Karen McManimon, Vice President  
Sheila Kirschbaum  
Jay Lee  
Virginia Prak  
Chummeng Soun

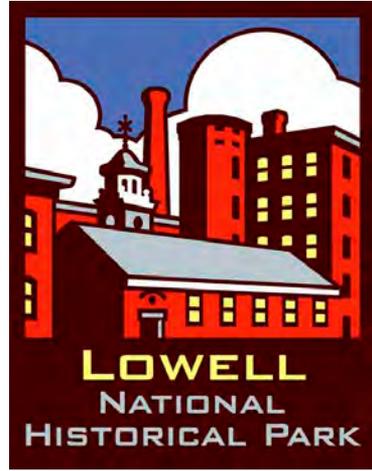
Visal Chin  
Robert Hart  
Sodany Krouch  
Sorin Sieng

## **Program Staff**

Dahvy Tran, Executive Director  
Tim Chan Thou, Operations Director  
Khakhada Horn, Program Manager  
Roselynn Soung, Program Assistant  
Shaun McCarthy, Grant Supervisor  
Emaly Horn, Communications  
Coordinator/Grant Writer



## SUPPORTERS



## *The Parker Foundation*

### Great Individuals

Chhan Touch  
Linda Sopheap Sou  
Dr. Sharon Clark  
Chummeng Soun  
Sovann-Malis Loeung  
Dr. Sue Kim  
Jim Higgins

Chrisna Khoun  
Christina Prum  
Jamie (Vladimir)  
Mendoza  
Tenzin Thoulutsang  
Paktra Lynch

## VISION

We envision Lowell, Massachusetts to be the epicenter for innovative Cambodian performing arts with the Angkor Dance Troupe at the core.

## MISSION

The Angkor Dance Troupe connects communities through the preservation, education, and innovation of Cambodian performing arts.

## HISTORY

The Angkor Dance Troupe was formed in 1986 by Cambodian refugees of the Khmer Rouge. Lowell's Cambodian American community, estimated at more than 35,000 people, is the second largest in the country. When we resettled here, we brought a passion to carry on our cherished cultural traditions to practice and perform, to teach our children, and to see our art preserved for future generations of all cultures.

We take our name from the great Angkor civilization, between 802 and 1432 AD when Cambodia was a dominant empire in Southeast Asia. Dance and music have always been prominent in Khmer society, but these ancient traditions were nearly eliminated when the Khmer Rouge controlled Cambodia in the 1970s. Artists were among those deliberately targeted for execution. More than 90% of the country's tradition bearers perished. Today, as Cambodians around the world struggle to emerge from decades of war and poverty, our people look to the rebirth and recreation of dance as testimony to the endurance of our culture.



# NANCY L. & RICHARD K. DONAHUE

*In Memory of Mr. Richard K. Donahue*

We extend our sincere gratitude to Nancy  
L. and Richard K. Donahue for their years  
of continued support.



[www.angkordance.org](http://www.angkordance.org)