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**CAMBODIAN LIVING ARTS RETURNS WITH A  
VIRTUAL FESTIVAL, CO-PRESENTED BY ARTSEMERSON**

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**ARTS & HEALING:  
BANGSOKOL VIRTUAL FESTIVAL  
A TWO-WEEK SERIES OF DIGITAL EVENTS  
DECEMBER 11 – 20, 2020**

**[Boston, MA – Tuesday, November 24, 2020]** – ArtsEmerson, Boston’s leading presenter of contemporary world theatre and the professional presenting and producing organization at Emerson College, is excited to team-up with Cambodian Living Arts (CLA) to stage **Arts & Healing: *Bangsokol* Virtual Festival** from December 11 – 20, 2020. This two-week series of online performances, film screenings, and conversations will bring artists, audiences, and leading cultural organizations from around the world together to revisit the making of the original **Bangsokol** stage production and to reflect on what that work and this project has meant to them.

In response to the challenges and realities of 2020, the digital festival is inspired by the groundbreaking multi-disciplinary production [Bangsokol: A Requiem for Cambodia](#), which seeks to honor victims of violence and explore the healing, hope and resilience of survivors. The festival culminates with two brand new music and dance performances created exclusively for the festival.



*A scene from **Bangsokol**  
Photo credit: Tey Tat Keng*



*A scene from **Bangsokol**  
Photo credit: Ferdinand Ting*

The festival will celebrate the intercultural connections forged around a Cambodian story, explore changing contexts in a time of global pandemic and highlight resilience, as well as creative strategies, collaborations, and responses to crisis. The program includes a mixture of screenings, including a documentary about the making of **Bangsokol** and a film capture of the Royal Gala Performance in Phnom Penh in November 2019, alongside discussions. The finale of the festival will comprise new music inspired by **Bangsokol** and a ritual dance performance, commissioned especially for the festival and featuring artists from five of the countries involved in the production.

David Dower, Artistic Director at ArtsEmerson shares, “We are committed to working in long arcs of time with our artists and communities that connect here through ArtsEmerson. So this festival is a perfect opportunity to continue discussions sparked by **Bangsokol** and extend the relationship with Cambodian Living Arts.” He adds, “The piece itself is profoundly moving and people who were in the sold out audiences when it arrived in Boston in December of 2017 still talk about it. So, we’re happy to be partnering with CLA to both expand on that experience for those who’ve seen it and to welcome people who were unable to attend the performances live.”

Susan Chinsen, Associate Producer at ArtsEmerson, shares, “This festival also uplifts the Cambodian diaspora, and recognizes our neighbors in Lowell, the second largest Cambodian community in America.” She continues, “As a virtual festival, physical boundaries are minimized, and the flow of healing from connections between the art and each audience member are increased.”

All members of the public are invited to get involved through #ArtsHealing2020. The Arts & Healing: Bangsokol Virtual Festival hopes to highlight stories of creativity, collaboration, and responses to crises around the world in 2020. Everyone can be part of this collective act of resilience. Share an image or video that tells us a story about the arts and healing for you in 2020. You can post on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag #ArtsHealing2020, and tag @ArtsEmerson ([Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#)) and @CambodianLivingArts ([Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)) or @CambolivingArts ([Twitter](#)). Submissions will be featured and highlighted throughout the festival!

An event calendar with all programs included during the **Arts & Healing: Bangsokol Virtual Festival** taking place December 11 – 20 may be found below.

All programs are free; to receive a link to view one or more of the festival presentations, please register [here](#).

**Photography and other media kit assets are available [here](#).**

## [FESTIVAL SCHEDULE](#)

### **The Making of a Masterpiece: The Creative Process**

DEC 11 @ 8:00PM ET | Approx. 120 mins | FREE

On demand from DEC 11 @ 10PM ET through DEC 20 @ 11:59PM ET

Film is In English, French and Cambodian with English subtitles

Behind the scenes documentary *Wandering Souls* follows **Bangsokol: A Requiem for Cambodia** in the 12 months leading up to its international premiere in Melbourne in 2017. The screening will be followed by a conversation between Oscar-nominated director Rithy Panh (*Bangsokol* film director), Him Sophy (*Bangsokol* composer), and Gideon Obarzanek (*Bangsokol* stage director) moderated by Gwyneth Bravo (NYU Abu Dhabi), about the making of this masterpiece.

Discussion with Creative Team to follow.

### **Requiem as a Musical Form in the Context of Cambodia**

DEC 12 @ 8:00PM ET | Approx. 60 mins | FREE

On demand from DEC 12 @ 9:30PM ET through DEC 20 @ 11:59PM ET

A conversation between Him Sophy (*Bangsokol* composer), Trent Walker (*Bangsokol* librettist), and Andrew Cyr (*Bangsokol* conductor) moderated by Elena Park (MET Opera, Kennedy Center, etc.), diving deep into the rich linguistic, musical and cultural aspects of this unique production and how it relates to—and deviates from—a traditional Requiem.

***Bangsokol* Gala Performance & Audiences' response from around the world**

DEC 13 @ 8:00PM ET | Approx. 130 mins | FREE

On demand from DEC 13 @ 10:30PM ET through DEC 20 @ 11:59PM ET

***Bangsokol: A Requiem for Cambodia*** is a multi-disciplinary stage production combining music, film, movement, and voice. After touring in Australia, the USA and France, ***Bangsokol*** premiered in Cambodia in November 2019. Watch the full performance of the Cambodia premiere—graced by the presence of HRH King Norodom Sihamoni as Head of State and Distinguished Patron of CLA. After the screening, we invite you to join a reflection and exchange between audience members Ada Khun, Seda Douglas, Emily Howe, and Chea Sopheap, all of whom have a deep connection with Cambodia and experienced the ***Bangsokol*** production in different cities during its international tour. Discussion moderated by Amara Goel.

*PERFORMING ARTS PANEL #1*

**From Cambodia to the World: Creative Collaboration Among Unlikely Partners**

DEC 14 @ 8:00PM ET | Approx. 60 mins | FREE

On demand from DEC 14 @ 9:30PM ET through DEC 20 @ 11:59PM ET

When CLA produced the Season of Cambodia Festival in New York City in 2013, people described this small NGO from Cambodia as 'the little engine that could.' What inspired arts organizations from Taiwan, the USA, and Australia to come on board with CLA as co-commissioners for this ambitious and challenging project? Why did they feel motivated to share Cambodia's story with a worldwide audience? To learn more about the international collaboration that brought this project to life, attend the conversation between the co-commissioners of *Bangsokol*: Taipei Philharmonic Foundation, Brooklyn Academy of Music and Cambodian Living Arts, moderated by Tisa Ho (Hong Kong Arts Festival).

*This Festival event is contributing to the HowlRound Theatre Commons — a free and open platform for theatremakers worldwide.*

*PERFORMING ARTS PANEL #2*

**Performing Arts Perspectives: Dealing with the Impact of a Global Crisis**

DEC 16 @ 8:00PM ET | Approx. 60 mins | FREE

On demand from DEC 16 @ 9:30PM ET through DEC 20 @ 11:59PM ET

The performing arts has been one of the sectors most severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic across the world. We are convening the presenters of ***Bangsokol*** to share the current situation in their countries and explore how the pandemic is affecting the current and future possibilities of presenting international work. Learn more about the impact, solutions, and strategies from the presenters of ***Bangsokol***: ArtsEmerson (Boston), Philharmonie de Paris (France), National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Taiwan), moderated by Bill Bragin (NYUAD Arts Center).

*This Festival event is contributing to the HowlRound Theatre Commons — a free and open platform for theatremakers worldwide.*

**Art, Healing & Hope: Creative Resilience**

DEC 18 @ 8:00PM ET | Approx. 75 mins | FREE

On demand from DEC 18 @ 9:30PM ET through DEC 20 @ 11:59PM ET

For the Festival finale, artists who were part of the ***Bangsokol*** production will present new works created exclusively for the virtual festival. Musicians and singers from five countries—Metropolis Ensemble (with Sandbox Percussion) composer Vivian Fung (USA), Taipei Philharmonic (Taiwan), Yong Siew Toh Conservatory (Singapore), Yuko Tomonaga (Australia), and Krom Dontrey *Bangsokol* (Cambodia)—will

reinterpret music inspired by the different themes of **Bangsokol**, followed by a dance ritual created and performed by contemporary dancer-choreographer, Chumvan 'Belle' Sodhachivy (Cambodia) and featuring participation from the public. Following the performance, we will conclude with a talk featuring the next generation of artists Vivian Fung, "Belle" and David Loke, moderated by Carol Becker (Columbia University School of the Arts)

### **Writing the Next Chapter**

DEC 19 @ 8:00PM ET | Approx. 60 mins | FREE

To conclude the festival, join the live discussion between the festival organisers Phloeun Prim (Cambodian Living Arts), Susan Chinsen (ArtsEmerson), and artist Chumvan 'Belle' Sodhachivy moderated by Jean-Baptiste Phou. The panel will reflect on the importance of ritual, arts, and healing and we invite the audience to share their experiences of joining this experiment of creating contemporary rituals, in a virtual setting. Interact with the panelists, share your questions and see the result of #artshealing2020.

### **CREATIVE CREDITS**

Festival Curator: Jean-Baptiste Phou

General Supervisor: Frances Rudgard (Cambodian Living Arts)

Creative Producer: Susan Chinsen (ArtsEmerson)

Executive Producer: Phloeun Prim (Cambodian Living Arts)

### **PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Cambodian Living Arts**

Founded in 1998 by genocide survivor and musician Arn CHORN-POND, for the past decade, Cambodian Living Arts has focused on endangered performing art forms and rituals. As 90% of Cambodia's artists did not survive the Khmer Rouge regime, Cambodia's artistic heritage was in danger of being lost forever. Over the last 20 years, both Cambodia and the arts scene have developed rapidly and CLA has evolved its work to match. They have focused on helping talented people to build and develop careers in the arts, through scholarships, fellowships, and support to troupes and individuals. Looking forward, CLA aims to promote creativity and innovation in the arts sector and to build links with neighbors in the Greater Mekong region and further afield in Asia. They are also working to get more arts and culture education into Cambodian public schools, and to increase performance opportunities for Cambodian artists. For more information about Cambodian Living Arts visit [CambodianLivingArts.org](http://CambodianLivingArts.org). For further background information about the **Bangsokol** production visit [Bangsokol.CambodianLivingArts.org](http://Bangsokol.CambodianLivingArts.org).

#### **ArtsEmerson**

ArtsEmerson's mission is to bring people together to experience powerful performances that delight, provoke, and inspire, celebrating both our differences and common humanity. Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard — the year the U.S. Census confirmed there was no single cultural majority in Boston — we committed to building a cultural institution that reflects the diversity of our city. Our imaginative season of globe-spanning performances, film, and dialogue invites each of us to be part of a Boston that is more creative, equitable, and connected. ArtsEmerson is led by Artistic Director, David Dower and Executive Director, David Howse. For more information visit [ArtsEmerson.org](http://ArtsEmerson.org).

#### **Emerson College**

ArtsEmerson and HowlRound Theatre Commons both operate from within the Emerson College Office of the Arts. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,780 undergraduates and 670 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, the Netherlands, London, China, and the Czech Republic as well as its new Global Portals, with the first program launching this fall in Paris. The College has an active network of 39,000 alumni who hold leadership

positions in communication and the arts. For more information, visit [Emerson.edu](http://Emerson.edu). For media inquiries specific to Emerson College, please contact Michelle Gaseau (E: [Michelle\\_Gaseau@emerson.edu](mailto:Michelle_Gaseau@emerson.edu), O: 617-824-3547, C: 617-429-2624).

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