

2001

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF  
**ARTS & IDEAS**



Welcome to the 2001 International Festival of Arts & Ideas.

Each year the Festival brings to New Haven some of the greatest performers, artists and thinkers from around the world, not just to entertain, but in the hope that they surprise and move you, leaving you exhilarated and changed. I hope that this year is no exception.



In a world where globalization is so often defined by the replication of a drab uniformity, it is important to remember that our greatest strengths are derived from our differences. The windows on the world that each one of the Festival's performers and speakers opens, are windows on humanity's extraordinary capacity for creativity, a creativity that endlessly enriches our lives. These artists and thinkers engender the courage and imagination that lie at the heart of successful societies and are our hope for the future.

In presenting them we hope that they bring you great pleasure.

Paul Collard  
Festival Director

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TheatreWorks in  
**The Continuum:  
Beyond the Killing Fields**

June 27-30, 8:00 PM

June 30, 3:00 PM

New Theater at 1156 Chapel Street  
Yale University

Conceived and Directed by Ong Keng Sen (Singapore)

Collaborators-Performers  
Em Theay (Cambodia)  
Kim Bunthom (Cambodia)  
Mann Kosal (Cambodia)  
Noorlinah Mohamed (Singapore)  
Thong Kim Ann (Cambodia)  
Yen Chang (Japan)

Producer Tay Tong (Singapore)

Soundscape Design Yen Chang (Japan)

Videography Noorlinah Mohamed (Singapore)

Lighting Design/Technical Coordination Dorothy Png (Singapore)

Production Manager (Cambodia) Fred Frumberg (USA-Cambodia)

Production/Stage Manager Valerie Oliveira (Singapore)

Translator Sotho Kulikar (Cambodia)

Stage Manager/Technical Assistant Lennie Lee (Singapore)

TheatreWorks would like to thank the following for their  
contribution and assistance with the production:

The National Arts Council (Singapore)  
The Cambodiana Hotel (Phnom Penh, Cambodia)  
Upside Down Concepts (Singapore) and The Film Equipment Gallery (Singapore)  
Scott Zielinski, Chan Chong Kai and Jazzlene Chua

## **The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields**

### **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

Anchored in the real life stories of four survivors of the Khmer Rouge massacre, including the story of 68 year-old Em Theay, a master dancer of the royal classical Cambodian tradition, *The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields* goes to the heart of Cambodia's recent history, exploring the consequences of Pol Pot's massacre of artists and intellectuals. This multi-disciplinary project brings together Singaporean, Japanese and Cambodian artists. Through interwoven spoken stories, classical Cambodian dance and song, shadow puppetry, documentary film images, and a live soundscape, the piece reveals the memories, histories, and challenges facing Cambodian artists in the wake of that tragedy. The different elements weave a tapestry from many different braids, ultimately resulting in a collective picture. The play is performed in the Khmer language, English and dance.

### **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

Ong Keng Sen has engaged in cross-cultural work with fellow Asian artists for six years. In 1994, he conceptualized *The Flying Circus Project*, a creative strategy laboratory which is a vibrant meeting of the contemporary arts and traditional performance. This is an intercultural workshop among Asian artists which explores the fields of theatre, music, dance, visual arts, ritual, and documentary film. Out of these workshops Keng Sen has developed several theatre productions that attempt to present onstage an Asia that is representative of today. Keng Sen has lectured in London, Paris, Berlin, Sydney, Tokyo, Seoul and Hong Kong. He was recently appointed to the International Council of the Asia Society of New York. He holds several foundation fellowships including the Japan Foundation, British Council, Asian Cultural Council (New York) and is also a Fulbright Scholar. Keng Sen's experience in the United States includes the direction of Chey Yew's *A Language of Their Own* at the Joseph Papp Public Theater in New York in 1995. In May 2000, he directed his first opera, *Silver River*, by David Henry Hwang and Bright Sheng for The Spoleto Festival. It was presented again in the Philadelphia New Music Theatre Festival in April 2001, and can be seen again in the Lincoln Center Summer Festival of 2002.

### **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

TheatreWorks, established in 1985, is an international performance company based in Singapore. It is known in Asia for its reinvention of traditional performance through a juxtaposition of cultures. Under the Artistic Directorship of Mr. Ong Keng Sen, TheatreWorks' concerns go beyond that of Singapore and examine the strong synergy between nationalism and internationalism. This philosophy informs the company's work and outlook. TheatreWorks has performed in the cultural capitals of Asia and Europe since 1992 in major festivals and cultural institutions.

TheatreWorks questions what is Asian in this age of globalization, internationalism, modernity and urbanization. It hopes to rethink the definitions of what is "Western," "Eastern," "first world" and "third world," and questions whether these dichotomies make sense in the new millennium. The processes and productions of TheatreWorks re-examine critical cultural issues without forsaking either emotional potency or artistry.

TheatreWorks is involved in a number of artists' laboratories and development projects including the Writer's Lab and the newly launched residency program, the T-Lab, which aims to support Singaporean artists to develop their own creative work and processes with international artists. In 1999, TheatreWorks initiated the Arts Network Asia that encourages and supports regional artistic collaboration by making grants available to assist regional collaborations.

Apart from intercultural concerns, TheatreWorks' recent works have challenged accepted history through a genre of docu-performance. Such works question the process of documentation itself and point to the slippage when translation occurs, both linguistic translation and translation from fact into history into myth into performance.



## **The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields**

### **ABOUT THE COLLABORATORS - PERFORMERS**

**Em Theay's** love for dance started at the age of seven when she became a classical dance trainee. At fifteen, she became the principle classical dancer of Songkom Reas Niyom, where she was based for the next twenty years. In 1970, with the change in the political situation, she became the classical dancer for the Kampuchean Republic although that was short-lived when civil war broke out in 1975. In 1979, Em Theay returned to dance and was appointed Master of Performing Arts with the Ministry of Culture. Her years as a dancer and singer have allowed her to travel extensively in Asia, Europe and the United States. Em Theay is ceaseless in her endeavor to develop her craft and continues to write songs and drama as well as to develop a new type of classical dance.

**Kim Bunthom** is the principle classical dancer for the Royal Government of Cambodia. She specializes in classical and traditional dance, musical theatre and chanting. She began her dance training at the Royal Palace at the age of six and upon graduation in 1970, she became a classical dancer for the Royal Palace of Cambodia. Kim's career came to a standstill for four years when civil war tore Cambodia apart. It was only in 1979 that she resumed her career at the Ministry of Culture's Performing Arts Department. Currently, Kim Bunthom is a trainer in the development of a new type of classical dance.

**Mann Kosal** specializes in shadow puppetry and is currently with the Specialty Opera Theatre. He graduated from the Royal Fine Art School in 1991 and following that, he spent several years with the Ministry of Culture's Fine Art Department. During this time, he began the Association Magic Circus which lasted till 2000 whereafter he set up Sovanna Phum as an independent artist. Mann Kosal continues to research the writing of classical dance and the making of new puppetry.

**Noorlinah Mohd** completed her Masters in Performance Studies at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts in 1999. In addition to her work as a performer, she is also involved in numerous research and educational projects. She has participated in productions in Singapore and abroad and has recently started creating video for performance.

**Thong Kim Ann** began her classical dance training after completing her secondary school education in 1962. Her training involved both classical and traditional dance and she specialized primarily in the male and giant roles. However, this was abruptly disrupted with the outbreak of civil war in the country. In 1979, she returned to her roots of dance as a classical dance performer with the Ministry of Culture. Currently, Kim Ann is involved in the creation of a new dance movement.

**Yen Chang** is a free vocalization artist and musical composer. Born in Hamada City, he took his first violin lesson at the age of three. In 1983 Yen formed a music group, Pink, with Hajime Okano and Hoppy Kamiyama. Due to their unique vocal style and strong songwriting, the group drew national interest and released albums every year before disbanding in 1989. In 1993 Yen released his first solo album. In the following years, he became involved in such commercial work as advertisements and television programs. Yen has also experimented with trance and techno music, as on his second album *UR Words*.

A more important part of his work has involved developing music with a particular interest in cross-genre collaborations with musicians, visual artists, vocal artists and dance performers. His work has brought him to Morocco, China and the United States. In December 2000, Yen participated in TheatreWorks' Flying Circus Project along with another 100 Asian artists.

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