



CAMBODIAN
LIVING ARTS

ARN CHORN-POND



Musician, Human Rights Activist, and Founder of Cambodian Living Arts

In 1984, Arn Chorn-Pond became the first Cambodian child soldier to speak publicly about the atrocities that occurred during the Cambodian genocide, delivering a speech to 10,000 people at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Arn has since led talks and workshops at conferences, universities and high schools around the world, seeking to inspire others by sharing his personal story of resilience and healing.

Book Arn to Speak at Your School in Person or Online

Arn Chorn-Pond regularly shares his personal story through speeches, presentations, podcasts, and workshops at conferences, universities, and high schools in the U.S. and around the world.

For inquiries and to learn more, please contact Phacdey Phary (Marketing and Fundraising Manager, Cambodian Living Arts) at phacdey@cambodianlivingarts.org





“ The entire experience was amazing. I really appreciate Arn’s courage to share his difficult past to a new generation.”

“Arn’s story helped me take a step back and think of how fortunate I am. After the workshop, I want to plan my future better and use my time better than before.”

About Arn

Born into a family of artists, Arn grew up in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime. Sent to a child labor camp and forced to play propaganda music during that period, Arn escaped to a refugee camp on the Cambodia-Thai border, where he was adopted by Reverend Peter Pond and moved to the U.S. as a refugee.

After graduating from Providence College, Arn returned to Cambodia on a mission to find the legacy of his family, who were involved in Cambodian Opera; his music teacher from the time of the Khmer Rouge; and the stars of his early childhood. Instead, he found Cambodia's few surviving master artists living in poverty.

Arn founded Cambodian Living Arts in 1998 with five inaugural students to learn from Cambodia's remaining master artists. The organization initially focused on the preservation of endangered performing art form and rituals. After the Khmer Rouge regime, 90% of Cambodia's artists did not survive and arts that had been transmitted between generations were in danger of being lost forever. Arn remains engaged with the organization's work, both as spokesperson and in particular with the work of The Khmer Magic Music Bus, a CLA program that brings musical performances and demonstrations to villages and communities around Cambodia that otherwise lack access to performing arts.

Arn was one of the first recipients of the Reebok Human Rights Award in 1988, and he received the 1991 Amnesty International Human Rights Award, the 1993 Kohl Foundation International Peace Prize, and the 1996 Spirit of Anne Frank Outstanding Citizen Award. Arn now lives outside of Phnom Penh.



“ This is an excellent talk that gives the clarity of a survivor from the daunting life during the Khmer Rouge. Although these dreadful events are talked about a lot, hearing from someone’s first-hand experience was especially moving.”

“I really appreciate that Arn is still able to talk about his tragic past and share his most hurtful memories and experiences with us, because this is not something that everyone can do. It was so inspirational.”

About **Cambodian Living Arts**

Cambodian Living Arts (CLA) was founded in 1998 by genocide survivor and musician Arn CHORN-POND. For a decade, we 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 we have evolved our work to match. We provide scholarships, fellowships, and professional development training to help the next generation of artists to build and develop careers in the arts. Our programs aim to give artists and cultural leaders the resources and opportunities to tell stories of contemporary Cambodia, from local stages, schools and community spaces to audiences around the world.

Looking ahead, we aim to promote creativity and innovation in the arts sector, and to build links with our neighbors in the Greater Mekong region and further afield in Asia. We are also engaging in cultural policy advocacy, building curriculums for arts education in public schools, and increasing performance opportunities for Cambodian artists.

Get in touch

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