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Cambodian
Living Arts
is to facilitate the
transformation
of Cambodia
through
the arts



Press Release

From Cambodian Living Arts



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THE NIRMITA COMPOSERS WORKSHOP: A NEW GENERATION OF CREATIVITY

In July 2016, award-winning Cambodian-American composer Chinary Ung will lead a two-week workshop in Siem Reap, in collaboration with Cambodian Living Arts and the Nirmita Composers Institute. This program aims to spark new creativity in young composers from Cambodia and the wider Mekong region.

Chinary Ung and Cambodian Living Arts believe that the next step in the region for the development of the arts, and of music particularly, is to generate more opportunities for artists to create. In Ung's words, "this is the era where investing in 20-30 people, producing 200-300 pieces, could fuel even greater and more powerful creativity for the next generation."

The workshop will involve 10 emerging composers and traditional musicians from Cambodia, 2 emerging composers from the United States, as well as mentors and emerging composers from Laos and Myanmar. The group will be supported by a world-class faculty of composers and performers from 8 countries around Asia and the USA, leading a program including sessions in creativity and technical skills, rehearsals, recordings, and performances.

The work will build from traditional musical forms, using them as the basis to create something new; not changing culture, but transforming and expanding tradition. The workshop aims to help participants develop the skills to create new musical works expressing something of themselves and of their time.

Chinary Ung said,

"The Nirmita Composers Workshop is part of a long journey, which CLA and RUFA have been working towards for many years. The students we will work with in the coming weeks are the future of musical creativity and innovation here - and I hope that the effects of this project will be enduring, and resonate throughout the region. But it is not only the students who will learn - the faculty members I hope will also be inspired, and return to their universities and their own musical projects with new creativity and energy."

Seng Song, Cambodian Living Arts' Associate Country Manager, said,

"CLA is so happy to facilitate this workshop. It encourages artists to draw on their cultural heritage and traditions, and to keep these traditions living, dynamic and meaningful. The participation of artists and mentors from around the Mekong region means we will also go deeper into understanding our neighbors and our shared culture. I hope that everyone taking part will leave the workshop inspired with new creative energy and with new creative connections."

Yim Chanthy, one of the participating musicians, said

"It is a privilege to be invited as one of the participants of 'Nirmita Composers Workshop'. As a traditional musician, I always strive to learn more about creative ways of conveying music as a message to audiences, so I'm confident that this workshop will give me valuable lessons and practices."

There will be a public concert by the faculty of the Nirmita Composers Institute at 7pm on Saturday 23 July, at Memoire Siem Reap. Tickets for this one-off performance by internationally-acclaimed musicians will be available on the door. For more information, or to reserve seats, email pich@cambodianlivingarts.org.

At the close of the workshop there will be a working session between the mentors from Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar. They will discuss how best to continue creative partnerships through this project and otherwise.

Press are invited to attend:

A short press conference at Le Grand Palais Boutique Hotel in Phnom Penh on Tuesday 12 July at 5pm, with Chinary Ung and faculty members, participants in the workshop, and representatives from CLA.

The opening ceremony of the Workshop at Wat Bo, Siem Reap, on Sunday 17 July. This will feature a blessing ceremony, a short musical performance by Sounds of Angkor, and an opportunity to hear from the faculty members and workshop participants. Interviews may be available upon request.

The Nirmita Composers Institute Faculty Concert, at Memoire Siem Reap, at 7pm on Saturday 23 July. This hour-long concert will showcase works by the faculty.

Please contact hermione@cambodianlivingarts.org if you would like to attend any of the above events.

Notes for Editors

Cambodian Living Arts

- Cambodian Living Arts was founded by Arn Chorn-Pond in 1998.
- Cambodian Living Arts is an independent not-for profit organization, based in Phnom Penh.
- The mission of Cambodian Living Arts is to facilitate the transformation of Cambodia through the arts. We work in collaboration with others to create an environment where Cambodian arts empower and transform individuals and communities. We do this by encouraging the growth of artists and the arts community, by promoting awareness of the arts, and by advocating for the arts with cultural policymakers and major institutions. In doing so, we aim to create value and understanding of what it means to be Cambodian and to create a sense of unity and shared culture. We believe that through creativity we can each expand our potential as human beings.

Chinary Ung

- Chinary Ung was born in 1942 in Takéo province, and moved to the US in 1964 to study clarinet. He currently lives in California.
- He is currently Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of San Diego, California and Presidential Fellow: Senior Composer in Residence at Chapman University.
- He was the first (Cambodian) American composer to win the coveted Grawemeyer Award (1989) for his piece Inner Voices. He has also received awards and commissions from The Kennedy Center (Friedheim Award), The American Academy of Arts and Letters, Asia Foundation, Asian Cultural Council, Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc., Ford Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, Joyce Foundation, and The National Endowment for the Arts. Most recently, in 2014, he was awarded The John D. Rockefeller 3rd Award by the Asian Cultural Council.
- Ung's music is published by C. F. Peters Corporation and his music is recorded on New World Records, Bridge Records, Cambria, London Records, Other Minds, Oodiscs, Nami Records, Kojima Records, Albany Records, Norton Recordings, Composers Recording Incorporated, Folkways Records, and Koch International.