

See You Yesterday

A GLOBAL ARTS CORPS Production

produced in partnership with
Phare Performing Social Enterprise
Phare Ponleu Selpak Association &
Amrita Performing Arts

*Nineteen young Cambodian circus performers,
second-generation survivors of the Khmer Rouge,
use their world class circus skills
to explode a legacy of silence.*



The Rwandan tour of *See You Yesterday*
has been made possible through the
generous support of the

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

Imagine a genocide you never lived through still shaping your daily life and impacting your choices for the future.

...In creating *See You Yesterday*, this troupe of young Cambodian cultural ambassadors between the ages of 13 and 30
did just that.

After working with Global Arts Corps for a period of 19 weeks over 4 years, they are now poised to take this production on the road.



The Journey Starts in Rwanda: Where two radically different cultures--survivors of separate civil genocides--will meet across the footlights.

In an amphitheater on top of a memorial burial ground in Kigali, they play to representatives of 18 countries...

...In a refugee camp near the Rwandan border, they perform for 24,000 Congolese refugees who have fled decades of war in their homeland...

...And in post-performance talkbacks and workshops bringing together Cambodia, Rwanda, and the DRC, the dialogue continues to reflect the scarred emotions of a parallel past.

Genocides intersect to create hope out of despair.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We began working with these performers in 2012, having been invited by Khuon Det, the Artistic Director and co-founder of Phare Ponleu Selpak, to consider a partnership after he learned about Global Arts Corps' work in South Africa and the North of Ireland. Det asked us to train a group of Phare's young performers in dramaturgical methods of probing their lives... in short, to teach them our process of 'acting before writing' in order to tell their stories and hopes for the future. He invited us on one condition that delighted us... that we would keep coming back for at least 5 years as the cast grew up. It's been 4 years so far... this is our fifth.

The journey has been both painful and joyful, at times in conflict with the cast's desire to focus on the present... but they stayed with it and worked with us for a total of 19 weeks over a period of 4 years. The desire to shut their ears to the past started to disappear. Circus performers became actors in the true sense of the word as we explored a collision of the two art forms. Our search opened dialogue between youth and their elders and new stories found their way into our rehearsals. As we moved through each other's shadows, we shared each other's hopes and fears and ended up with a story that reflects a collective consciousness forged out of fragmented memories and a fierce desire to enter the future.

When the production previewed in Phnom Penh earlier this year...the reaction between generations was unexpected. Almost as if each side of the generation gap had delivered the most humane of gifts to each other: the gift of listening and imagining and remembering with each other.

Now, when we return to Rwanda in July, it will be for the second world premiere of a Global Arts Corps production in Kigali. The first was for our South African production, *Truth in Translation*, which premiered at the French Cultural Centre ten years ago. The World Premiere of *See You Yesterday* will close the two-year-old international Ubumuntu Arts Festival in Kigali. From there, we will perform in a Congolese refugee camp occupied by people who have escaped over the border to seek safety for their families from a long and devastating war in their home country. The history of the Phare Ponleu Selpak, having been born in a Thai refugee camp after the Khmer Rouge regime, will make this interaction particularly poignant. The exchange of dialogue will now be between Cambodia, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Dialogue between three cultures all looking to find reconciliation with their pasts... and perhaps helping each other to do so by creating a stage where humor and empathy can find their way into a theatre of people really listening to each other.

- Michael Lessac

Artistic Director Michael Lessac watching rehearsals of *See You Yesterday* with students at the Phare Ponleu Selpak in Battambang.



WORLD PREMIERE - *See You Yesterday* THE RWANDAN TOUR

Ubumuntu Arts Festival, Kigali, Rwanda

July 17th, 2016

Founded by Hope Azeda, a leading light in contemporary Rwandan theatre and an internationally-recognized arts activist, the Ubumuntu Arts Festival will celebrate its second year in 2016. Bringing together companies from 18 countries around the world—including Syria, Kosovo, Sudan, Iraq, and the North of Ireland (among others)—for four days of performances, workshops, and dialogue on the grounds of the Kigali Genocide Memorial, this year's festival will be dedicated to fostering reconciliation and recognizing artists as ambassadors for change.

Kigeme Refugee Camp, Nyamagabe District, Rwanda

July 19nd, 20th, and 21st, 2016

Located in the southern province of Rwanda, the Kigeme refugee camp is currently home to 25,000 dislocated Congolese, over 50% of them children, who have escaped the threat of ongoing violence and starvation after years of war to seek safety in neighboring Rwanda. In addition to hosting three outdoor performances in the camp, Global Arts Corps will organize post-performance talkbacks and workshops with young Congolese struggling to adjust to radically different living conditions and envision new, peaceful paths forward in communities torn apart by violence.



*An assemblage of kinetically realized stories and memories--played out in stunning acrobatics, tumbling, balance, and juggling--**See You Yesterday** physically embodies the emotional and intellectual risks required to address a previously unspeakable past.*

From the preview performances of *See You Yesterday* in Phnom Penh:

"KR gives way to Hope in Haunting Show"

"Combining the physical ability of athletes with the dramatic talent of actors [...]"

-- *The Cambodia Daily*

"The Earth cried when Sreypov beautified the pains of women who suffered by the Khmer Rouge. [...] I love the performance from the bottom of my heart."

-- *Youk Chhang, Executive Director, [Documentation Center of Cambodia](#)*

"I don't know what I was expecting but this work is unbelievable. I've often covered books and films about the Khmer Rouge, talked to people who lived through the regime [...] and seen pretty touching works about it. But this is rather incredible in depth and beauty."

-- *Michelle Vachon, Journalist, The Cambodia Daily*





Members of the Cast and Crew pictured in Battambang, from left to right: (Back row) Jacqueline Lessac, Khuon Det, Sreyleap Nov, Michael Lessac, Houn Sopheap, Preap Pouch, Pay Phearum, Khuon Kimlon, (Middle row) Phat Sreyleak, Sarah Case, Sreyleak Nov, Bob Berky, Houth Hieng, Sim Sinak, Mony Ratanak Sambath, Lay Virak, Chuob Kanha, San Samdy, Ney Lina, (Bottom row) Chumvan Sodhachiv, Mon Borey, Heng Chhaya, Cheat Sopheap, Sim Chantha, and Yam Sopheap.

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

THE CAST

Cheat Sopheap

Cheat Sopheap started his circus training in 2006 at Phare Ponleu Selpak. His circus skills are acrobatics and balancing act. He has been part of the *Rouge* and *Eclipse* productions. He has toured to Europe and to Hong Kong.

Chuob Kanha

Chuob Kanha is 20 years old. Inspired by her brother who is a music student at Phare Ponleu Selpak, Kanha started her circus training in 2003. She is a contortionist and does partner acrobatics. She has worked with many local and international theater and circus artists and recently toured to France in the *Eclipse* production.

Heng Chhaya

Heng Chhaya was born in 1991. He started his circus training at Phare Ponleu Selpak in 2003, specializing in acrobatics. He is in the *Eclipse* cast that recently toured in France.

Houn Sopheap

Houn Sopheap (Lign) was born in 1993. He started his circus training in 2003 at Phare Ponleu Selpak. He performs in *Rouge* and *Eclipse*.

Houth Hieng

Houth Hieng is among the first generation of professional artists at Phare Ponleu Selpak. She started her circus training in 1998. She has worked on numerous projects including Theatre le Soleil and has toured to countries in Europe and Japan. Currently Hieng is an instructor and pedagogy coordinator at PPS.

Khuon Kimlon

Khuon Kimlon was born in 1990. He was trained in circus at Phare Ponleu Selpak. He has been in several of Phare's productions including *Putho*, *Sokha*, and *My Village*.

Lay Virak

Lay Virak was born in 1991. He was trained in theater at Phare Ponleu Selpak in 2010. Verak has been part of several productions at Phare.

Mon Borey

Mon Borey is 18 years old. He was trained in theater at Phare Ponleu Selpak. Borey has a strong interest in theater and this is his first professional production.

Mony Ratanak Sambath

Mony Ratanak Sambath, age 23, was trained in circus at Phare Ponleu Selpak. He is an acrobat and juggler. Sambath is a very talented artist and has toured extensively in Europe to perform. He has keen interest in developing his arts further.

Ney Lina

Ney Lina, born in 1990, was trained in theater at Phare Ponleu Selpak. She has performed in several educational theater projects.

Nov Sreyleak

Nov Sreyleak was born in 1991 and started her circus training at Phare Ponleu Selpak in 2004. She performed in her first production at the age of 14. She is a contortionist, hand balancer and acrobat. She has recently toured to France as part of the *Eclipse* production.

Nov Sreyleap

Nov Sreyleap was born in 1987 and was trained in theater at Phare Ponleu Selpak. For the past 15 years at Phare, Sreyleak has worked in numerous projects, including the production with Theatre du Soleil.

Phat Sreyleak

Phat Sreyleak is 18 years old and was trained in circus at Phare Ponleu Selpak. She is among the youngest members of the cast in this production. Sreyleak has demonstrated great interest and dedication to her artistic development for the past two years working on this project.

Sem Sinak

Sem Sinak, born in 1983, was trained in theater at Phare Ponleu Selpak. Sinak believes in the arts because she can contribute to improving her own community and she learns passionately about life.

Pay Phearum

Pay Phearum is 22 years and was trained in circus at Phare Ponleu Selpak. He is an acrobat and rola bola specialist.

Preap Pouch

Preap Pouch was born in 1987 and started his theater training in 1998 at Phare Ponleu Selpak. He has performed in numerous educational theater projects and toured to provinces in Cambodia. From 2006-2013, Pouch was a cast member of *Eclipse* and *Royaume du Cambodge*. He also performed in the production of *The Terrible but Unfinished Story of King Sihanouk*.

San Samdy

San Samdy is 24-years-old and started training in circus in 2006 at Phare Ponleu Selpak. He has performed in *Eclipse* in Cambodia and has toured to Europe several times.

Sim Chantha

Sim Chantha was born in 1993. When he was young, he saw the training at Phare Ponleu Selpak and was fascinated. He was trained in the juggling act in circus at Phare Ponleu Selpak. Chantha is a cast member of *Eclipse*.

Yam Sopheap

Yam Sopheap was trained in the diabolo act in circus at Phare Ponleu Selpak. He joined the school in 2007. He is currently a circus student at Phare Ponleu Selpak.

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM BIOS (continued)

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Michael Lessac

Director

Michael Lessac combines multiple careers as a director in film, television, theatre, music recording and performance, psychology, higher education, and holds a PhD in Perception and Early Childhood Development. In 1973 he founded the award-winning Colonnades Theatre Laboratory in NYC and for 10 years produced and directed over 30 theatrical productions. He has directed over 200 television shows and TV pilots in Hollywood including *Taxi*, *Newhart*, *Grace Under Fire*, *The Drew Carey Show*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *Lucky*, and *George and Leo*, among others, as well as the feature film *House of Cards* that he wrote and directed starring Kathleen Turner and Tommy Lee Jones. He recently directed the award winning documentary film *A Snake Gives Birth to a Snake* and has directed freelance internationally and in the US at the Kennedy Center, the Public Theatre, the Arena Stage, and The Guthrie Theatre, among others. Lessac is the creator and director of the award winning international theatre piece *Truth in Translation*, which he co-produced with South Africa's Market Theatre. *Truth in Translation* performed in 26 cities in 11 countries and led to his founding of the Global Arts Corps. GAC is a US 501c3 non-profit theatre and education foundation dedicated to using professional theatre to support reconciliation initiative in countries emerging from conflict and celebrating and fostering the possibility of perceptual change.

Arben Bajraktaraj

Associate Director

Arben Bajraktaraj is an Albanian actor from Kosovo, living in France. He has worked with many theatre companies in France, Kosovo, Albania and Slovenia and played in various classical and contemporary productions. In cinema, he has worked with Tony Gatliff on his World War II drama treating a destiny of a gypsy family, Gilles Pacquet-Brenner on *Sarah's Key*, Jean-Pierre Ameris on an adaptation of Victor Hugo's *The Man Who Laughs*, and he has also appeared in Xavier Beauvois'

(Arben Bajraktaraj continued) *Of Gods and Men* (Grand Prix du Jury, Cannes 2010) and Maïwen's *Polisse* (Prix du Jury, Cannes 2011). He has worked with David Yates on *Sex Traffic* and played Dolohov in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Recently he has worked with Teona Strugar Mitevska on *Woman who Brushed Off her Tears* (Berlinale, 2012) and Luan Kryeziu's Kosovar movie *The Hero*.

Bob Berky

Associate Director

Bob Berky, an OBIE AWARD winning solo artist, has performed in major theatres and theatre festivals throughout the world. He received a Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival for his one-man show *FOOLS-FIRE*; is also recipient of the Kennedy Center's New American Plays Award for his two-man play, *Cooking the World* and the Sarrett National Playwriting Prize for *The Redness Of The Woodpecker*. Bob has joined Global Arts Corps as a participant and trainer in workshops in South Africa and Cambodia.

Andrew Buckland

Associate Director

Employing a dynamic combination of visual comedy, political satire, clowning, physical theatre, mime and an explosive performance style, Andrew's works have become synonymous with provocative, entertaining and stimulating theatre both in South Africa and internationally. He is known for his groundbreaking, original work, including *The Ugly Noo Noo*, *Bloodstream*, *Fuse*, *The Well-Being*, *Feedback* and *Between the Teeth*, which has won him numerous awards for Best New Original Script, and Best Performance. Since July 1992 he has been employed in the Drama Department at Rhodes, and the opportunity to combine research and teaching of new performance forms and contexts with professional practice has resulted in the creation of 24 new theatre works many of which have been toured internationally. Professor Buckland spent 2008/2009

(Andrew Buckland continued) performing as Sgt Pepper in *LOVE The Beatles* for Cirque du Soleil in Las Vegas. In July 2010 he was appointed Head of the Drama Department at Rhodes.

Khuon Det

Director of Circus

Khuon Det was born in 1972 to a rural family in Battambang, Cambodia. At the time, the civil war was raging and was soon followed by the genocidal regime of Pol Pot and his murderous organization, the Khmer Rouge. At a young age, Det fled to a vast refugee camp on the border of Thailand in order to escape the atrocities. He lived there until the age of 22. It was the "survival of the fittest" in the chaotic camp environment, so he learned martial arts in order to defend himself. In addition to practicing combat techniques and gymnastics, Det participated in drawing workshops offered to child refugees. His experiences led him and a group of friends to create Phare Ponleu Selpak (the brightness of the arts), with the goal of helping youth in his situation overcome the trauma of war. Established in 1994, the association now cares for many children, offering circus, drawing, theatre, dance and music classes as well as a general education. As Artistic Director, he had created dozen of productions and brought them on tours locally and globally.

Michael Jay

Composer

Michael Jay is a composer and audio engineer who contributed to some of the milestones in music technology. Recently, Michael mixed projects nominated for Grammy and Academy awards, as well as the first TV program to be mixed digitally. As a music editor, he won a contributing Emmy award, worked on Michael Jackson's "Ghosts," and on Oliver Stone's 2016 biopic of NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. As a music engineer, Michael has worked with Neil Young, Brian Eno, and the band Yes, for whom he engineered "Talk" – the first album to be recorded to personal computer.

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM BIOS (continued)

THE CREATIVE TEAM

(Michael Jay *continued*) Michael's work as composer of incidental music for theatre goes back many years starting with Michael Lessac at the Colonnades theatre in NYC. Michael also has been a graduate professor at New York University.

Dave Feldman

Lighting Designer

Dave Feldman, owner of FELDMAN DESIGNS LLC, has been providing lighting design and theatrical consultation for television, video, dance, theater and corporate meetings for more than 30 years. His designs include shows that can be seen on NBC, HBO, MTV, VH1, Fox, Comedy Central, AXS- TV, Cablevision, PBS, E!-Entertainment, The Food Network, Lifetime & Disney television. His theatrical designs have been seen in over 25 countries at prestigious theaters such as: London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, The Millennium Dome, The National Theatre of Taiwan, The Iblana Theater in Dublin, the New Victory Theater and Lincoln Center in New York. Dave Feldman received the New York Dance and Performance award, "The Bessie" for outstanding creative achievement as a lighting designer. Current projects include: *That Metal Show*; *Best Time Ever w/ Neil Patrick Harris*; and The NBA All- Star Game.

Chumvan Sodhachiv

Choreographer

Born in 1985, Chumvan Sodhachiv (Belle) is a dancer,

(Chumvan Sodhachiv *continued*) choreographer and teacher from Cambodia. Belle began her training in Cambodian Classical Dance in 1994. In 2003 she graduated from the National High School of Performing Arts and continued on as a final year student at the Royal University of Fine Arts in 2007.

As a performer she has toured throughout Asia, Africa, North America, and Europe. She has studied under Robert Wilson in the US and has been a featured dancer in works by Emmanuelle Phne, Arco Renz, Peter Chin and others. Belle has also choreographed many of her own works and was most recently a featured dancer in Stravinsky's *Persephone* directed by Peter Sellars at the Teatro Real in Madrid, Spain. In Cambodia, she is a lecturer on the Faculty of Choreography Arts in Phnom Penh and a choreographer/dancer at Amrita Performing Arts.

Scott Lehrer

Sound Designer

Scott Lehrer began his theatre sound work as a member of Michael Lessac's Colonnades Theatre Lab and has designed over 150 plays and musicals since then. In 2008 he received the first sound Tony Award for the Broadway revival of *South Pacific*. As a music producer/engineer his work includes the 2015 Broadway cast recording of *An American in Paris* (Grammy nom), Loudon Wainwright's *High Wide and Handsome* (Grammy award) and Meredith Monk's *mercy*.

Vong Vannak

Costume Designer

Vong Vannak is an international performer and designer. Vannak began his training at age 10 at the Secondary School for Fine Arts. Upon graduation with a concentration in contortion, silks, and classical ballet, he attended the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh to further develop and refine these skills. Since graduation in 2009, Vannak has studied and worked internationally for private and national companies in Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos as a designer, choreographer, and performer. Vannak designs for Shopy&Sina Boutique in Phnom Penh and international contemporary dance troupes.

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Jacqueline Bertrand Lessac, *Executive Producer*, Global Arts Corps

Kang Rithisal, *See You Yesterday* Line Producer; *Executive Director*, Amrita Performing Arts

Sarah Case, *Managing Director*, Global Arts Corps

Hourt Bunny, *See You Yesterday* Stage Manager

We would also like to recognize the contributions of the following Global Arts Corps Associate Artists, who worked with the cast during our early production development workshops: **Nick Boraine** (*GAC Associate Artistic Director*), **Sibulele Gcilitshana**, **Thembi Mtshali-Jones**, **Clement Mensah**, and **Robert Koen**.

Special Thanks

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Robert Bosch Stiftung

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SEE: *See You Yesterday*, 6-minute film of rehearsal footage from Global Arts Corps' production development workshops: <https://vimeo.com/149697989>
Global Arts Corps: The First Five Years, a 10-minute introduction to our work: <https://vimeo.com/93496531>
& Global Arts Corps' website: www.globalartscorps.org