

*Review*

# Bangsokol – Requiem for Cambodia

*A Performance for World Peace*

Kjell Skylstad<sup>+</sup> Editor in Chief

They came to Europe so that the world will not forget- the traditional ensemble from the Faculty of Music of the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, invited to work with the Juventes and Young Choir ensemble of students from the Regional Music Conservatory of Paris. Their common aim: To stage the first European performance of Bangsokol – a Requiem for Cambodia on May 16, 2018 at the Paris Philharmonic Hall.

Bangsokol is an original multi-media work created to honor the victims of the genocide committed under the Cambodian Khmer Rouge rule from 1975 – 1979. In Buddhist community practice it is a ceremony performed to pacify the spirits of the deceased to help in their transmigration to a better world. In creating this work Him Sophy and the Cambodian Living Arts, the central cultural organization of today's Cambodia, intended to help the survivors and their communities in their still ongoing process of coming to terms with their experiences

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Combining, intertwining and alternating instrumental and vocal sounds of both worlds and supported by a visual process of remembrance, the composer in this remarkable composition succeeded in very poignantly giving expression for our common grief and an equally shared longing for reconciliation and peace. A very special feeling of being involved in an authentic ritual was conveyed by a Cambodian vocal duo singing the *Smot* – the traditional mourning for the dead

As especially also pointed out in the program by CLA Executive Director Phloeu Pinh the Cambodian Living Arts "strongly believes that the transformation of Cambodia through the arts could constitute a model for other societies in conflict or post-conflict situations across their histories to offer to their affected populations ... an instrument for healing."

See <http://bangsokol.cambodianlivingarts.org/press-media/>



Figure 1. Images from the performance.