

TRIBE MUSIC, FOLK MUSIC & POPULAR DANCES

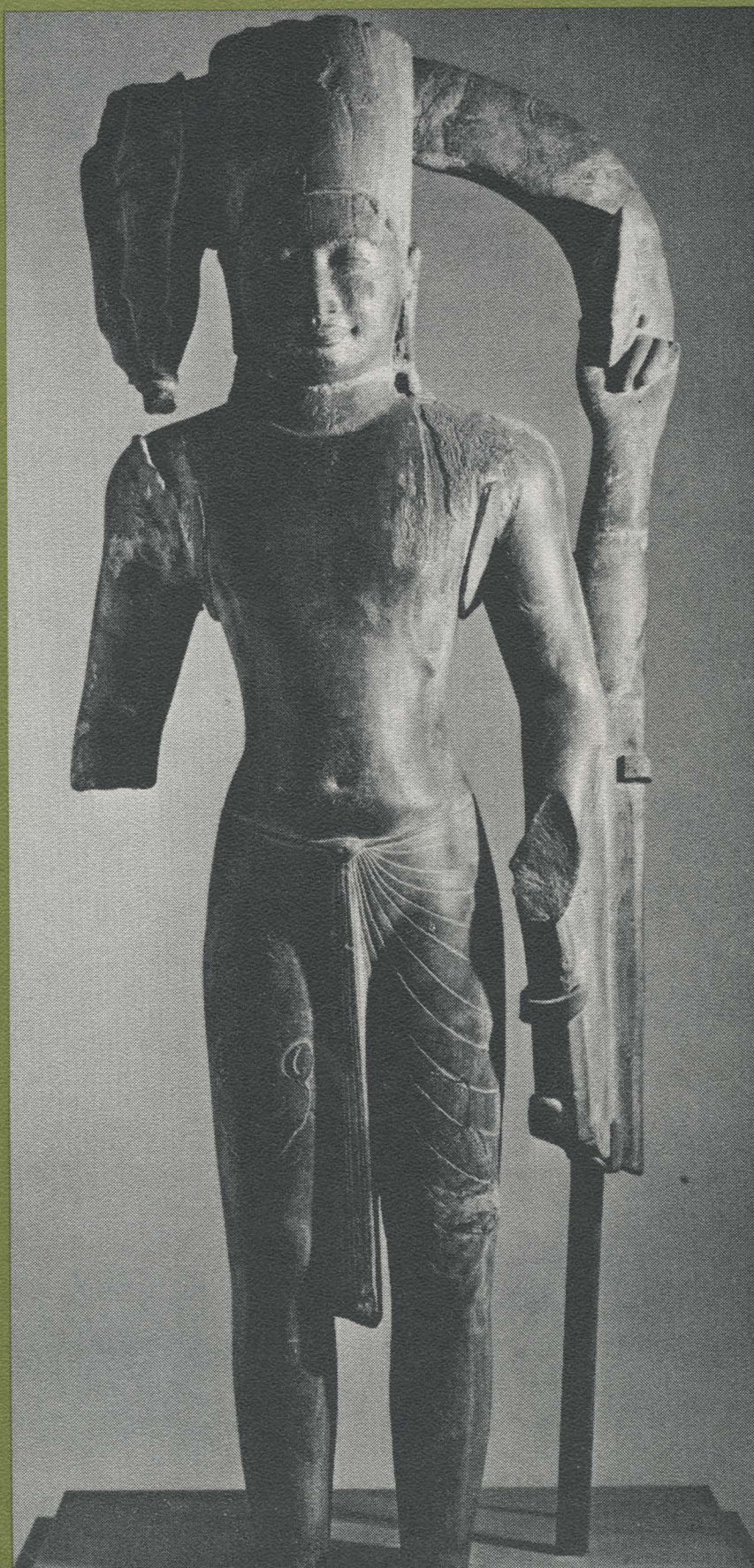
ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4082

COMPILED & ANNOTATED BY CHINARY UNG



Cambodia | Traditional Music

VOLUME TWO



KHMER SCULPTURE, MUSEUM GUIMET, PARIS

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4082

SIDE I

1. PEI POK (2:26)
(single-reed bamboo flute solo)
2. CHAPEI VENG (2:27)
(long-neck lute solo)
3. PHLOM SNENG (3:08)
(single-reed animal horn solo)
4. KHMER LOEU (8:34)
(plucked-string ensemble)
5. KHMER LOEU (3:15)
(gong ensemble)

SIDE II

1. KROM PHLENG MOHORI (3:50)
(style of the Ayaii dance ensemble)
2. KROM PHLENG KAR (3:23)
(wedding ensemble)
3. KROM PHLENG KAR (3:23)
(wedding ensemble)
4. RABAM KRAGOAK (3:20)
(peacock dance with ensemble and Sralay)
5. RABAM TRALOAK (4:44)
(coconut dance with ensemble and male voice)

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Cambodia

Traditional Music

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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CAMBODIA TRADITIONAL MUSIC Volume II

Tribe Music, Folk Music and Popular Dances

compiled and annotated by
CHINARY UNG



PHLEUNG KAR ENSEMBLE

Throughout several centuries, music has been an essential component in the Khmer culture. From court music to folk music and the various musics of native tribes in remote areas of Cambodia, most types of music are performed only when a specific cultural occasion calls for it.

It was only two decades ago that music and instruments from the remote areas of the country arrived in the capital city of Phnom Penh. Also, there is still a large number of folk and tribal instruments which are unknown outside their particular villages, perhaps because of the rarity of the ritual event which calls for the performance of that particular instrument or music. It is entirely probable that with the advent of modernization, many kinds of Cambodian music will disappear along with the cultural conditions which nurtured them.

Angkor Vat, the Khmer center of culture and the capital city during the 12th century, displays not only the high level of architectural achievement of that period, but also the refined bas-relief sculptures depicting numerous important historical events and numerous art forms.

Upon viewing the musical instruments pictured there, one realizes the instrumental evolution to the present day--a number of instruments, like the angular-harp and the curved-harp, have disappeared completely from use.

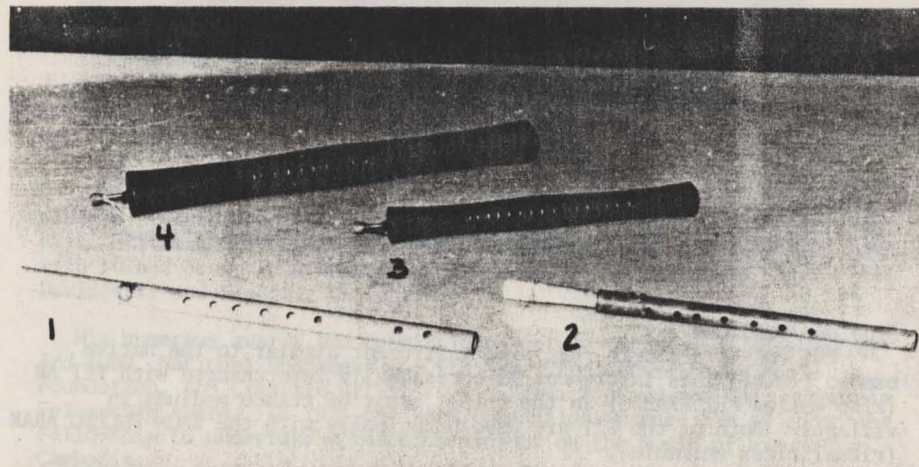
Among the many instruments used in folk and tribal musics are the crab-claw shell, animal horn, single reed bamboo flute, bronze gongs, double-reed bamboo flute, straw pipe, leaves, snail shell, coconut shell percussion, and numerous instruments from varieties of the bamboo family.

In most folk and tribal music of Cambodia, two essential elements form a distinct foundation--the sound of drones and the effect of rhythmic patterns executed with a limited number of notes.

One example of the use of a drone in this album is CHAPEI VENG (side one/band two). Here the lowest note creates a constant drone of open strings (two strings tuned in unison) with relatively isolated rhythmic stresses for punctuation. In contrast to this, the high strings (also tuned in unison), are used to articulate the melodic line. Along with the playing of the instrument, the player usually sings his own improvisational songs or epics.

Another type of drone can occur with wind instruments or voices, as in the piece SNENG (side one/band three). During the last half of the piece, a one note drone or "tone center" is predominant while other notes function as transient, elaborating, and/or ornamenting notes.

Furthermore, a drone may combine more than one function--such as in the gong ensemble (side one/band five) in which the lowest gong creates an almost-sustained drone while punctuating the constant, repetitive melodic patterns.

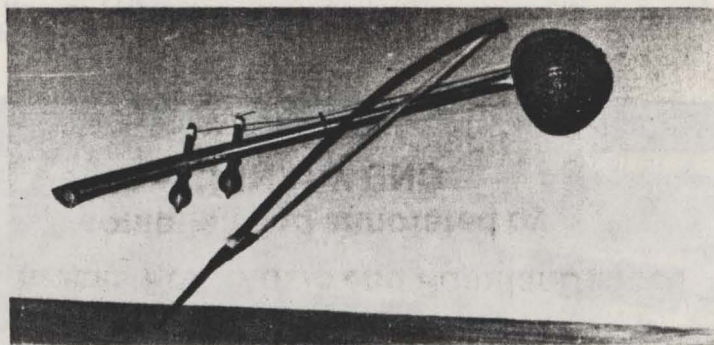


1. KLOUY 2. PEI AR 3. SRALAI TOUCH 4. SRALAI THOM

Aside from the use of various types of drones, the use of rhythmic patterns emphasizing only a few notes (in either instrumental, vocal or percussion) is an essential element. Any given pattern can be repeated continuously for long periods of time throughout a piece. In a vocal piece, a simple steady time beater like a bamboo block may be added--in the case of an instrumental piece, tribes may add hand-clapping or foot-tapping for rhythmic articulations.

A note-set used in a rhythmic pattern usually consists of a very limited number of "notes". For example, a vocal piece may be based on the use of two notes set approximately a perfect fourth apart. The notes are sung in the context of a rhythmic pattern which moderately repeats and alternates between the two notes, forming a phrase. The vocalist shifts the note-set gradually upward by half-steps (by emphasizing microtonal fluctuations of the two-note set) to another transposed interval. The ascending parallel chromatic motion is not rigorous, nor is it necessarily obvious during a performance, due to the very slow movement upward, the constant repetition of phrases and the atmospheric sense of infinity which the vocal line evokes. It may perhaps be said that the use of what we call a perfect fourth rising in constant parallel chromatic steps is not compositionally purposive, but an intuitive, natural, traditional practice. It should also be made clear that many vocal pieces do not function as "songs", but in various cultural aspects such as incantations, invocations to the spirits and prayer.

The terms folk music and tribal music have much in common, as a study of Cambodian instruments and practices of music-making can be traced to a few tribes. It appears that many types of music, in Cambodia as well as neighboring areas of Southeast Asia, shared similar experiences or cultural attitudes, at one time or another. This perhaps can be traced to the time when the KHMER empire (descendants of the MON-KHMER tribe) were the predominant race in most of the regions of Southeast Asia.



TRO OU

Side one/band one

PEI POK is a single-reed wind instrument similar to the native bamboo flute. This instrument is occasionally interchanged with PEI AR (also called PEI PRABOS) in the ritual event of trance mediums in villages. Both of the PEI are used principally with the KROM PHLENG ARAK (ritual rites ensemble).



MOHORI ENSEMBLE

Side one/band two

CHAPEI VENG, a lute or long neck guitar, is used often by folk singers to accompany legendary epics. On certain occasions the CHAPEI VENG is used instead of the KHSE DIEV (monochord lute) in the PHLENG KAR (wedding music) ensemble.

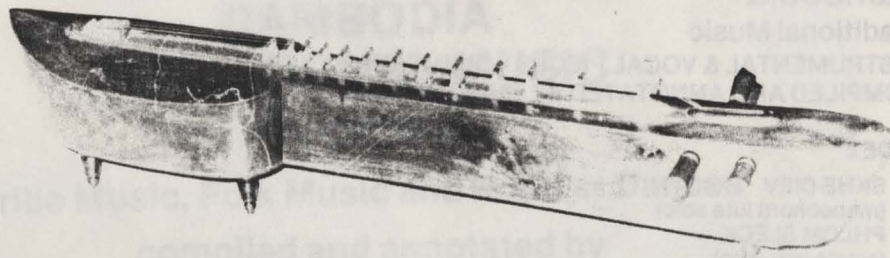
Side one/band three

SNENG is a single-reed wind instrument made from an animal horn. It is generally used as a solo instrument and is most widely played by the elephant master while riding from village to village. The SNENG has long been used by the SAOCH tribe, located in the Elephant Range mountains in the county of PREY NOP, KAMPOT Province.

Side one/band four and five*

KHMER LOEU is a general term meaning Northern Cambodia, but it can specifically refer to the BU NOEUR tribe in the MONDULKIRI province in the northwest region of present-day Cambodia. (Other known native tribes in northern Cambodia, scattered in isolated regions, are: the KUOY, in KOMPONG THOM Province; the STIENG in the county of CHLONG, KRATIE Province; the PEAR, in PURSAT Province; the SAMREA, in the vicinity of ANKOR VAT, SIEM REAP Province.) The BU NOEUR, like many other tribal societies in Southeast Asia, has her own inherited instruments. The KHONG, for example, (various sized gongs with flat or nipples surfaces) have been used up to this century. A number of gongs can be suspended in a horizontal circle, almost touching the ground, with a single player in the center. The KHONG can also be played with only one player to a single gong. A number of techniques for KHONG performance are unknown, but some are; execution by striking with a closed fist, open palm, flat fingers or back of the hand, performed with controlled attacks and damping techniques.

In these particular pieces, recorded in a public park in Phnom Penh during the 1950's, both drones and rhythmic patterns can be found.



TAKKHE

Side two/band one

KROM PHLENG MOHORI is similar to the MOHORI ensemble of the Royal Palace only in their instrumentation. Here the ensemble consists of the CRAPEU or TAKKHE, literally "crocodile," a plucked string instrument, the TRO SO, a high-pitched, two-string fiddle; the TRO OU, a low-pitched two-string fiddle; the KHLOY, a bamboo or (rarely) brass flute; the SKOR ARAK, a drum with a pottery or wooden base and a snakeskin head, and the KHRAB, slap sticks made of bamboo or wood.

The ensemble usually accompanies a number of dancers in the performance of popular dances. On other occasions it can be accompanied in the AYAII ensemble, usually two singers who are experts in improvisational rhyme and prose. The use of flutter-tonguings, slidings and shoutings by the dancers here is also found in the CHAYAM, TROT and other popular dances.

Side two/band two

PHLENG KAR (wedding music) ensemble has a number of pieces in its repertoire, usually performed according to the directions of a guru (ACHHA) conducting the three-day wedding ceremony. For example, the HOM RONG begins the ceremony at the first sundown, addressing the attention of the genies or spiritual forces. PHLENG KAT SAK is played the second day, while PREAH THONG is played while the bride and groom have slim cotton threads tied around their wrists and are showered with flowers. SAR KANTEL (rolling the straw mat) is performed during the ceremonial event of REAM SA KANTEL.

The instruments in this ensemble are; TRO SO, high-pitched, two-string fiddle; TRO OU, low-pitched, two-string fiddle; KHSE DIEV, monochord lute; and SKOR ARAK, drum.

Side two/band three

PHLENG KAR (wedding music) in this piece is the same ensemble as in band two with the addition of PEI PRABOS (or PEI AR), a double-reed attached to a bamboo flute. The rhythmic pattern of the ARAK here is used to accompany a male dancer for a particular event in the ceremony.

Side two/band four

The piece is performed by students at the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. The group was the first in the country to explore various kinds of folk, popular and tribal music.

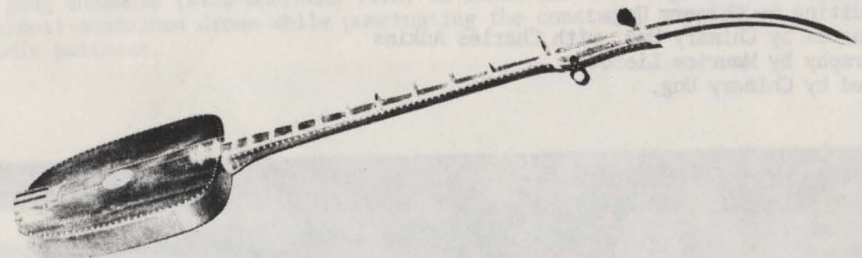
In RABAM KRAGOAK (peacock dance), the SRALAI, a double-reed wind instrument, carries the melody.

Side two/ band five

Also performed by the students at the University of Fine Arts, the RABAM TRALOAK (coconut dance) is a popular dance and song which displays feelings of unity and nationalism of the KHMER people, the peaceful nation, at one time. The text here, however, is improvised by the singer, who adds certain phonemes to create rhymes and various phrase contours.

Generally, the use of phonemes is found in almost every song in many diverse ensembles. On certain occasions, such as in the ensemble of the Royal Palace, the singer inserts phonemes to such an extent that the total vocal line can be transformed from words with specific meanings to sounds which perhaps represent gestural atmosphere and feelings.

In this recording, the instrumentation consists of the TRO SO (a high-pitched, two-string fiddle); the CRAPEU or TAKKHE, meaning crocodile, a plucked-string instrument; the CHOP CHHING, a pair of antique cymbals; SKOR ARAK, drums; and a male singer and dancers who use coconut shells as percussive instruments and shouting of articulated phonemes.



CHAPEI VENG

CHINARY UNG (b. Cambodia, 1942) came to the United States in 1964, studied at the Manhattan School of Music and received a doctorate with distinction in Composition from Columbia University. Dr. Ung has studied with Bulent Arel, Jack Beeson, Chou Wen-chung, George Crumb, Mario Davidovsky and Vladimir Ussechevsky.

His numerous awards and commissions include the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, the Koussevitsky Music Foundation, the Creative Artist Public Service Award and the Guggenheim Fellowship Award. In 1975 the Ford Foundation awarded him an Indochina Fellowship to undertake a research project on the music of his native Cambodia.

His recently published articles focus on East/West music, both traditional and contemporary. "More Than Pitch and Rhythm" and "The Root of Musical Expression" were presented at the 20th conference of the International Musicological Society at the University of California at Berkeley (USA, 1977), and the Fifth Asian Composers League conference in Bangkok (Thailand, 1978), respectively.

Dr. Ung's publishers are C.F. Peters Corp. and Paul Price Publications. His composition, MOHORI (1974), for mezzo-soprano and chamber ensemble, is available on the CRI label.

Dr. Ung is presently assistant professor of theory and composition at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois.

acknowledgements

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Tape editing by Chinary Ung.
Liner notes by Chinary Ung, with Charles Adkins
Photography by Maurice Liebot.
Produced by Chinary Ung.

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4081

Cambodia

Traditional Music

INSTRUMENTAL & VOCAL PIECES VOLUME ONE
COMPILED AND ANNOTATED BY CHINARY UNG

SIDE I:

1. SKHE-DIEV
(monochord lute solo)
2. PHLOM SLECK
(single leaf solo)
3. KROM PHELENG KHMER
(ensemble/male voice)
4. KROM PHELENG KHMER
(ensemble)
5. CHHAYAM
(perc. ens./male voices)

SIDE II:

1. KROM PHELENG PINPEAT
(perc. ens. & sralay)
2. MOHORI
(ensemble/female voice)
3. KROM PHELENG PINPEAT
(perc. ens. & sralay)
4. KROM PHELENG PINPEAT
(perc. ens. & sralay)