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FIRST RUN FEATURES to Release
dancing across borders

**Feature Documentary by Anne Bass about a Young Man's Journey
from Cambodia to the Ballet Stage in America**

Coming to Theaters Nationwide in Spring 2010



First Run Features has acquired all North American rights to the new feature documentary ***Dancing Across Borders***, which chronicles the intimate and triumphant story of Sokvannara Sar who was discovered in Cambodia and brought to the ballet stage in America. First Run will release the film beginning March 26 in New York, with other major cities to follow.

On a trip to Angkor Wat, Cambodia, in 2000, Anne Bass came across sixteen-year-old Sokvannara (Sy) Sar performing in a temple with a traditional Cambodian dance group. His amazing natural charm and grace as a dancer moved her immensely; even after returning to America the memory of Sy's performance and remarkable abilities lingered.

A longtime patron of dance in the U.S., Bass decided to offer this young man the opportunity to leave his home and follow a dream that he could not yet have fully imagined. She asked the World Monuments Fund, who helped sponsor Sy's dance troupe, to contact his teacher and parents to find out if Sy would like to visit New York where Anne could introduce Sy to the world of ballet and see if he had an interest in

auditioning for the prestigious School of American Ballet (SAB).

Sy arrived in New York at sixteen without any classical ballet training and was initially turned down at SAB, and so after studying privately with legendary ballet teacher, Olga Kostritzky, the head of the boys program at SAB, Sy auditioned and was accepted to study at SAB. When Sy arrived at SAB most of his peers had already been training for at least six years. Sy studied at SAB for five years and when he finished his training there Peter Boal, a principal dancer with New York City Ballet and one of Sy's instructors at SAB, became the artistic director of Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) and invited Sy to join the PNB School's Professional Division, where he eventually became an apprentice and joined the corps de ballet. Shortly after joining PNB Sy also entered and reached the semi finals of the International Ballet

Competition at Varna, Bulgaria, the world's oldest and most prestigious ballet competition.

What unfolds in *Dancing Across Borders* is a tentative negotiation between Sy and the world of American ballet and culture—from the serene countryside of Southeast Asia to the halls of New York's School of American Ballet to the stage of the Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle. The film follows Sy's training and development as a dancer through footage that was shot originally to inform his parents of his progress in America, and it offers a remarkable behind-the-scenes look into the world of ballet. At its heart, *Dancing Across Borders* is an extraordinary story of growth, adaptation, and belonging as well as of the development of talent and the mastery of an art form.

Dancing Across Borders features a remarkable real-life cast of performers and others involved in the arts, including Olga Kostritzky, Jock Soto, Peter Boal, Philip Glass and more.

Director/Producer Anne Bass has a long history of involvement in the arts and Cambodia. She has served on the Board of Directors and Executive Committees of the Fort Worth Ballet (where she founded the company's ballet school), the New York City Ballet, the School of American Ballet, and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. She is also on the board of the American Friends of the Paris Opera Ballet.

In Cambodia, Bass is Vice President of the Board of the Center for Khmer Studies. In 2006, working with the Center and with The Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library, Bass created the Khmer Dance Project which will film and document the dance of the Khmer people as it is practiced and remembered by Khmer dancers today. Bass is a graduate of Vassar College and is a former contributing editor of *Vogue* and *House and Garden*. In addition, she was a member of President Reagan's Task Force on the Arts. *Dancing Across Borders* is her first film.

DANCING ACROSS BORDERS

88 minutes, color, 2009

Directed by Anne Bass

Producers Anne Bass, Catherine Tatge

Editors Girish Bhargava, Mark Sutton

Directors of Photography Bob Elstrom, Anthony Forma, Tom Hurwitz

National Playdates

New York	To be announced	Opens March 26
Los Angeles, CA	Landmark Nuart	Opens April 16
San Francisco, CA	Landmark Lumiere	Opens April 30
Berkeley, CA	Landmark Shattuck	Opens April 30
Philadelphia	Landmark Ritz at Bourse	Opens April/May TBD
Seattle, WA	Landmark Varsity	Opens April/May TBD
Washington DC	Landmark E Street	Opens April/May TBD
Boston, MA	Landmark Kendall	Opens April/May TBD

More about the film: www.dancingacrossborders.net.

More about First Run Features: www.firstrunfeatures.com