

The "Ray Charles of Cambodia" debut UK Tour

"As a singer I'm very drawn to voices, and it was Kong Nay's voice that pulled me right in. There's a warmth that comes out, and you know there's been some suffering there. You feel both the sun and the rain coming out of that voice."

Peter Gabriel

Kong Nay is the king of the blues in Cambodia, a country that knows more than its fair share of suffering. Blinded by smallpox as a child, he is known as the Ray Charles of the Mekong Delta, playing a long-necked two-string guitar and singing songs that have a history stretching back 25 centuries. You don't need to understand the words to understand the intensity and authority with which this survivor of Pol Pot's killing fields sings about life, love, loss and death.

Kong Nay and his family were marked for death by the Khmer Rouge, and he only just escaped with his life. Now 62 and living in poverty in Phnom Penh, he plays his music on the streets in order to make the few dollars that mean the difference between hunger and a meal on the table.

Invited to Britain by Peter Gabriel, Kong Nay's debut album will be released this year on Real World records. As part of his first UK tour, he will be one of the headline performers at this year's WOMAD festival at Charlton Park, Wiltshire, on July 27-29.

The Fulte Player film will also be shown before all of Master Kong Nay's performances. The film tells a moving and informative story of Arn Chorn Pond as he returns to his native Cambodia to help Master artists like Kong Nay.

Other tour dates are :

July

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 19 | The Assembly House, Norwich | 01603 598688 |
| 20 | The Cut, Halesworth | 0845 6732123 |
| 22 | South Street, Reading | 01189 606060 |
| 24 | Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea | 01792 602060 |
| 25 | Arnolfini, Bristol | 01179 172300 |
| 31 | Chapter Arts, Cardiff | 02920 311050 |

August

| | | |
|---|--|--------------|
| 1 | British Museum, London | 02073 238000 |
| 1 | Cargo London | |
| 2 | Wiltshire Music Centre, Bradford Upon Avon | 01225 860100 |
| 3 | The Space, Stroud | 01453 767576 |
| 4 | The Barbican, London | 02076 388891 |
| 5 | The Arches, Glasgow | 0870 2407528 |
| 6 | The Old Fire Station, Oxford | 01865 297170 |

For high-res pictures, videos and a full biography of Kong Nay:

www.cambodianlivingarts.co.uk

For further information and interview opportunities, contact Dickie Chappell:

email richard.chappell@petergabriel.com

mobile 07799031951 / 07812080737