

Guitarist Eichelmann enthralls diplomats and top officials in PP



Hun Manly presenting a memento to Hucky Eichelmann. Supplied

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“When I heard Hucky’s guitar playing a few months ago in Los Angeles, I was extremely impressed and admired his virtuosity and mastery in playing different styles apart from playing the strictly classical. He is a sensitive and wonderful musician,” said late Indian sitar legend Pandit Ravi Shankar.

New age pianist and Grammy Award winner George Winston said “Hucky Eichelmann is a great guitarist, arranger, interpreter and composer. I really love his Asia album. He looks deeply into the soul of many cultures. He is truly a world citizen musically and plays with great heart and soul.”

This maestro made his personal presence in Phnom Penh last week

in what turned out to be a mesmerising two hours of soul rendering music.

His incredible talent and versatility captivated diplomats from a number of European and Asian nations in a 90-minute long performance last Tuesday, hosted by the Thai Ambassador to Cambodia, Panyarak Poolthup and was followed up by another session hosted by the Managing Director of Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra, Dr Supachai Verapong for selected officials from the Royal Government of Cambodia and youth delegates.

This writer was fortunate to witness and listen firsthand the exotic music which came from the master guitarist who resides in Thailand, since four decades ago.

Hucky pioneered the development of music and dance as artistic director of the Bangkok International

Guitar Festival & Series (1984-1989) and the Thailand Festival of the Arts (1997-2000), the country’s first ever arts festival which brought a new dimension to Thailand’s art and cultural scene.

Hucky’s professional career spans over five decades. He has toured globally and performed at some of the world’s top venues including a concert at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

Though holding a master’s degree in classical music, Hucky has developed his own musical repertoire of great diversity bridging the cultures of East and West as well as the classical with the folkloristic and the classical with the popular.

The international media has dubbed him as “Musical Ambassador between East and West”.

Ambassador Poolthup said that

the efforts to bring Hucky to perform in Cambodia is his parting gift to Cambodia as he would be retiring from the diplomatic service this year.

“I started my career as the Cambodian Desk officer in the foreign service and it is fitting that I retire as Ambassador of Thailand to the Kingdom of Cambodia this year. My team and I had worked for several months to pull off this mini feat of bringing Mr Hucky Eichelmann for the distinguished guests gathered here.

“Hucky’s music transcends boundaries and penetrates the soul with the various sounds and notes which vibrated from his guitars. It is an honour to have him in Phnom Penh and I am grateful for his presence in Cambodia,” Ambassador Poolthup said.

Sofitel’s Managing Director Dr Supachai Verapong, speaking on

Wednesday said that it was an honour for him to host distinguished government officials led by Hun Manly, Chairman of Commission on Education, Youth, Sports, Cult, Religious Affairs, Culture and Tourism of the National Assembly and President of the Youth Federation of Cambodia at the Phokeethra Sky and thanked Ambassador Poolthup and Hucky for the mesmerising hour long musical expedition aptly named Magic Melodies.

“It is also good to see old friends gathered here and this event is also my tribute to Ambassador Panyarak who has done amazing things to enhance Cambodia-Thai relations. I am very glad that all gathered here enjoyed the performance and we hope we will have the opportunity to have the virtuoso guitarist here again in the future,” Dr Verapong said. ■



From right: Supachai Verapong, lawmaker Hun Manly, Ambassador Panyarak Poolthup, Senior Minister Ly Thuch, Education Minister Hang Chuon Naron and Environment Minister Say Samal. Supplied

Ex-UNTAC chief visits Anlong Veng Peace Centre

DC-Cam

LIEUTENANT General (Rtd) John Sanderson, former UN Forces Commander, for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) paid a special visit to the Anlong Veng Peace Centre that was established under the Documentation Centre of Cambodia (DC-Cam).

Lt Gen Sanderson, who is on his first visit to the Kingdom since the collapse of the Khmer Rouge movement 20 years ago, toured the centre’s grounds, visited historical sites, and met with a former Khmer Rouge soldier.

His wife and Australian Ambassador Pablo Kang accompanied him during the tour on April 30

that was guided by Ly Sok-Kheang, the centre’s director.

“The tour began with an introduction to the centre. I provided an overview of the centre’s wide-ranging activities including the peace and human rights education programme that the centre has brought to the children of former Khmer Rouge members,” Sok-Kheang said.

Lt Gen Sanderson, Sok-Kheang added, paid particular attention to the centre’s permanent exhibition panels, which included images and information about the repatriation of Cambodian refugees during the UNTAC period.

“Under UNTAC supervision,

some refugees were returned to their home regions by way of trains, which was depicted in one exhibit,” said Sok-Kheang.

Anlong Veng is home to a population of approximately sixty thousand people, of which 80 percent of the adult population are former Khmer Rouge members. Anlong Veng reintegrated into the national community in 1998, five years after UNTAC fulfilled its mandate.

Lt Gen Sanderson also visited several historical sites, such as the local warlord, Ta Mok’s meeting house and Pol Pot’s cremation site. Ta Mok’s former meeting house on top of the Dangrek Mountain serves as a classroom for youths to learn



(From left) Ly Sok-Kheang, Mrs Sanderson, Lt Gen John Sanderson and Australian Ambassador Pablo Kang. Suot Vichet/Documentation Centre of Cambodia Archives

about the Khmer Rouge regime.

Lt Gen Sanderson later met with former Khmer Rouge soldiers, including Vong Saran.

Sok-Kheang said Vong Saran expressed his pleasure in meeting Lt Gen Sanderson and “both engaged

in a very friendly discussion, ranging from the time they met to the difficult situation in which the Khmer Rouge boycotted the Peace Agreement. Both sat, talked and shared stories of a pivotal chapter in Cambodian and Southeast Asian history”. ■