



Lao music being performed on stage at the festival.

The very unusual British and Lao music festival

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A new and unusual musical event was organised by the British Business Group on the theme of sharing and getting to know British and Lao music – with an open invitation to everybody and free entry.

The festival was designed to encourage people to listen and discover other musical styles and artists that they don't have the habit of listening to. This discovery of new music was designed to go cross-border, and international guests were encouraged to learn about Lao music, and Lao guests to discover British music.

The highlight came with live music from Lao musicians. First the Danxang Music Group played traditional Lao music on the



Singers perform on stage.

khaen under the direction of Khamsuane Vongtongkham, Mo Khaen and a professor from the National School of Music and Performing Arts. There was even a note of international exchange when Khamsuane invited Peter Livermore – who played khaen solos at the National Culture Hall during the Khaen UNESCO World Heritage celebrations in 2018 – to join the group to play two traditional Khaen Lam.

The final performance by Danxang was the rendering of a piece of British music on the Khaen, accompanied by a saxophone and an accordion.

The second group of Lao musicians were from the Pianist Vientiane Chamber Orchestra. The audience was impressed by the beauty and power of the songs from the lead singer, Mookdavan Khattiya, and the extremely professional and talented musicians that accompanied her on the piano, cello, violin, flute and saxophone. They opened with

a dynamic rendering of “Dean Haeng Idsara” and finished with beautiful interpretations of two British songs.

A special music awards section was organised later in the evening. The VIP guest, Somsanouk Mixay, drew ticketed numbers belonging to the public and the musicians, and guests with chosen tickets were asked two questions – one about British music and one about Lao music, with the requirement to have one correct answer to win awards.

Two sponsors made this event possible. Crowne Plaza offered the venue and a large video screen, plus a hotel stay award. Seven Orients-Creative Seven Arts supported the musicians and the design, and offered two of their Lao Khaen music CD albums, one featuring Mo Khaen Khamsuane and another featuring an international mix of Khaen with jazz instruments.

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