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Global Arts Live presents

**DEREK GRIPPER**  
Playing kora for a six-string  
guitar

**October 23, 8pm**  
**Crystal Ballroom at the**  
**Somerville Theatre**

**Global Arts Live: 617.876.4275**  
[globalartslive.org](http://globalartslive.org)

**Boston, MA** — Global Arts Live presents [Derek Gripper](#) on Saturday, October 23 at 8pm at [Crystal Ballroom at the Somerville Theatre](#), 55 Davis Square, Somerville. Tickets are \$25-\$28 reserved cabaret-style seating. For tickets and information call Global Arts Live at 617.876.4275 or buy online at [globalartslive.org](http://globalartslive.org).

A deeply sensitive and truly virtuosic performer, South African guitarist Derek Gripper renders the great kora works of Malian masters Toumani Diabaté, Ballaké Sissoko, and others for classical guitar. Transcribing the works originally written for the 21-string kora (harp lute) for a six-string classical guitar, Gripper magically transforms an ambitious technical feat into atmospheric works of “depthless beauty.” (*Songlines*).

Gripper has produced some of South Africa's most extraordinary works by fusing the country's disparate creative traditions with styles found throughout the world. His music draws on Malian kora works, Cape Town's folk style, European classical traditions, avant-garde Brazilian works, and even Indian classical music, all while synthesizing them into a style uniquely his own.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, Derek Gripper was raised on the classical greats, from Bach to Villa-Lobos. Initially, he learned violin and piano at school, studying classical guitar as a teenager and then continuing his search for musical inspiration to incorporate into his own style. The search took him to India where he studied South Indian Carnatic music while he continued to explore various composers and musicians from around the world and within South Africa. Inspired by Vieux Farka Toure's performance style along with Salif Keita and Baaba Maal, Gripper understands the fixed compositions of West African musical styles. He was exposed to the recordings of Toumani Diabate in 2009, unleashing a fascination with

kora music. Gripper has strived to emulate the sound produced from the 21-stringed instrument on the classic six-stringed guitar and upon embarking on a classical guitar tour in Europe in 2014, he began to incorporate the kora style into his repertoire.

Gripper released his ninth album, *One Night on Earth: Music from the Strings of Mali*, late in 2012. Recorded at an all-night session, the album interprets a centuries-old ancient African musical heritage, arranging kora compositions on solo guitar, a feat which classical guitar legend John Williams said he thought was "absolutely impossible until I heard Derek Gripper do it." *Songlines* called *One Night on Earth* "a staggering achievement," and selected the recording as a Top of the World album in 2013. When kora maestro Toumani Diabate heard the recording he asked his producer to confirm that she had actually seen one person play this music on just one guitar. He immediately invited Gripper to collaborate with him in Mali, an invitation which saw Gripper performing at the Acoustik Festival Bamako in early 2016, the first international festival held in Mali since 2012.

Aside from transcriptions, Gripper has created original music from his diverse influences, ranging from Mali, Senegal, The Gambia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe to Arvo Pärt and Egberto Gismonti. He has also spent many years performing and recording his own translations of Bach's violin and cello music, infusing his interpretations with his lessons from the oral traditions of Africa. His works for string quartet, larger ensembles or installations have been performed/exhibited at The Venice Architecture Biennale, Peasmarsh Chamber Music Festival in the UK and used in films such as *Five Fingers For Marseilles*.

Gripper has 17 recordings to date with his most recent being *A Year of Swimming*, released January 20, 2020. It was recorded by Howard Butcher at Peace of Eden and includes songs by Derek Gripper, Baaba Maal, Mansour Seck, Salif Keita, and Madosini.

For additional information please visit:

[www.derekgripper.com](http://www.derekgripper.com)

High resolution images [here](#).

Please note: Masks will be required indoors for all patrons and staff. All must present either [proof of vaccination or negative COVID test](#) in order to enter the venue. For details see [globalartslive.org/covid-safety-protocols](http://globalartslive.org/covid-safety-protocols)

**Global Arts Live** is a nonprofit organization that brings inspiring music and dance from all corners of the world to stages across greater Boston. By putting the spotlight on exceptional artists and reflecting the diverse and vibrant community that is Boston, we aspire to transcend borders, cultivate community, and enrich lives. A trusted curator for almost 30 years, Global Arts Live has made live, international music, and dance a vital part of Boston's cultural scene by featuring more than 800 artists from 70+ countries in over 1,500 performances attended by more than one million people. To be as inclusive as possible, foster experimentation, and support a diverse community of artists, Global Arts Live is not bound by walls. Instead, it brings outstanding artists to the most appropriate setting—from intimate 200-seat clubs to 2,500-seat theaters and everything in between. Each year, it presents over 60 concerts in more than 15 different venues across the city.

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