

Kings of Convenience Bring Norway to Moscow

By [Simone Peek](#)

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Eirik (left) and Erlend (right) in their native Norway, where the pair first joined to write their delicate melodies. **Ase Holte**

Many years after "Abba" and "Ace of Base" rose to prominence, and following the turn of the millennium, Scandinavian artists once again began to leave their permanent mark on pop culture.

Having roamed the globe armed with little more than two acoustic guitars and their soothing voices, Kings of Convenience will finally give their first concert in Moscow.

Kings of Convenience is a Norwegian acoustic pop-duo, consisting of Erlend rye and Eirik Glambek Вѐе. Since 2001 they have recorded three albums, with Feist contributing to one of them. On May 23, they will perform a selection of their songs in the capital's "Zelyony Teatr" (Green theater).

Erlend fýe spoke with The Moscow Times on how his band earned its status in pop, performing in a second language, and some of the stresses and strains that come with being in a world-renowned group.

What do you hope to visit while you are in Moscow?

I prefer seeing cafes, bars, and people's homes. I hope to try to understand how people live here. I'm not so interested in "sites" really.

There are three days between your arrival and the concert, how do you spend your time between the shows?

Well, I would like to have as much Russian food as I can. Like, really good stuff, made by the mama.

When your band came to the forefront in 2001, this was simultaneous with the upswing of Scandinavian influence in worldwide pop music, arts and fashion.

What made Scandinavian bands conquer the world?

It could be the kind of English that Scandinavians use. We have learned a lot of English but in a "school way." Because we are not English, it's very important for us to speak properly and clearly.

We use a kind of "universal English" and I think it's one of the reasons that it appeals all over the world to other people who also have English as their second language. We also use more universal themes, not like rap music, for example, which uses a lot of references that are specific to a certain area.

In Russia, there are many bands that also sing in English but have not yet been able to grasp the attention of the world. Do you have any advice for young aspiring bands?

I first started out in a band called "Peach Fuzz," and we sounded a lot like English bands at the time.

When I started making music with Eirik again, I understood something quite important: Why would English people be interested in a band that sounds like music from England? They already have it.

Kings of Convenience was offering something that in a little way could seem a little bit Norwegian.

It is important to realize that you are still from where you are from. You have to offer something that only someone from Russia could offer.

The last album came out in 2009. In 2010, you told "The Independent" that recording and touring required "a constant state of emergency," and that it was time to slow down. You are still touring around the world, what changed?

This statement was more about recording. When making albums, you have to put a lot

of other things aside to get everything done. That is why we don't work that hard anymore to make new albums: Because if you do, you don't have a life.

We spent many years of our lives to reach the level where we are now. I think it is very important that we now go around the world and play this music, and present it live.

If we had made more music, we would simply not play a lot of our great songs in our live performances. We have never played in Moscow, so if we had just made a new album, Moscow would have never heard any of the songs that we made before.

Moscow is hosting a lot of festivals this summer, what is it like to play on festivals?

When a festival gig goes really well, it's really amazing. In 2010, we played at Roskilde Festival for 10,000 to 16,000 people. At a festival, everybody has been in a good mood for several days. That is pretty fantastic for a band.

If you are playing in a city, visitors are still stressing about "the dinner with their grandmother" when they arrive and they spend half the concert even becoming receptive to music.

How do you spend your time at the festivals yourself?

I love going around the crowds and listening to bands. That's why I play at festivals, so that I can discover other bands. And I love going to the camping sites where people are just hanging around.

Kings of Convenience are performing in the "Zelyony Teatr" (Green theater) at 8 p.m. on May 43. Kacey Johansing from California will be the supporting act. Johansing performs solo at Masterskaya Club on May 22.

For more information visit: www.getscandy.ru tickets are available at: www.koc.ticketforevent.com

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