



30  
JULY

WOLF TRAP PRESENTS:  
**BEN HARPER &  
THE INNOCENT CRIMINALS**

## BORN TO SHINE

Listen to **Ben Harper** speak and his calm, patient demeanor comes across straightaway. Place this Grammy-winning California native on a stage with his band, **The Innocent Criminals**, however, and you'll be taken aback by his explosive passion and energy.

Known for his eclectic mix of blues, funk, soul, reggae, and rock, singer/songwriter Ben Harper picked up the guitar as a child and began playing gigs at age 12. After performing on stage with blues artist Taj Mahal in 1992, he was signed to Virgin Records. His debut album, *Welcome to the Cruel World*, was released in 1994 and became a folk-rock platform for his sociopolitical lyrics.

Harper's sophomore album, *Fight for Your Mind* (1995), was his first to go gold, and its follow-up, *The Will to Live* (1997), was his first to feature The Innocent Criminals. *Burn to Shine* (1999) propelled

Harper further into the spotlight as "Steal My Kisses" and "Suzie Blue" secured frequent radio play.

Harper's latest albums include 2013's *Get Up!*—a collaborative effort with blues master Charlie Musselwhite that remained at No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Top Blues Albums chart for two years—and 2014's *Childhood Home*—a "timeless" (AllMusic.com) folk record made with his mother, multi-instrumentalist Ellen Harper, that made the Top 50 of the *Billboard* 200.

## The Band is Back!

Ben Harper's 2015 tour is the first time he's reunited with The Innocent Criminals since their hiatus in 2008. As Harper related in an interview with *Rolling Stone*, "Enough time had passed to where all roads led back to The Innocent Criminals."

## Meet The Innocent Criminals

Leon Mobley, *percussion*

Juan Nelson, *bass*

Oliver Charles, *drums*

Jason Yates, *keyboards*

Michael Ward, *guitar*

## Collaborative Mastermind

Ben Harper has recorded with a diverse range of musicians including blues guitarist John Lee Hooker, Grammy-winning gospel artists the Blind Boys of Alabama, The Beatles' drummer Ringo Starr, and many more.

—Mariam Aburdeineh

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