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Courtney Love Goes for a Picnic

By Jonathan Earle

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Love will play for the first time in Russia on Saturday at Kolomenskoye.

Tens of thousands of rock fans and summer lovers are expected to flock to the Afisha Picnic, the city's largest outdoor music festival, at Kolomenskoye on Saturday.

Headliners include British rockers Kaiser Chiefs; Zemfira, Russia's pre-eminent brainy songstress; and Marina & the Diamonds, the up-and-coming new wave group. But stealing the show, as she tends to, will likely be the ever-entertaining Courtney Love.

Grunge goddess, frontwoman for Hole and widow to Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, Love will be performing in Russia for the first time.

As famous for her wild shows off as well as on the stage, the singer, who has a history of drug use and run-ins with the law, admitted in an interview with Afisha magazine that she didn't know much about Russia but did say she had once been in rehab with a Ukrainian girl named Yeva.

As part of her rider, Argumenty.ru reported that she has asked for a tour of the Kremlin and a taste of authentic Russian food. More in tune with the traditional rock 'n' roll rider, she is also alleged to have asked for seven types of whiskey, which must be in the minibar in her "cold" hotel room.

When informed by a Lenta.ru reporter that Afisha Picnic is alcohol-free, for those who buy tickets at least, she maintained that one didn't have to drink to enjoy music.

Afisha Picnic has always been more than the music with stalls, games and food on offer, like a country fair as designed by your favorite or least favorite hipster cousin. More than 100 stores will sell everything from clothes to vinyl records to soft toys. Topshop will hold a thrift shop — hipster nexuses worldwide, but a relatively unknown concept in Russia — where guests that bring three "interesting," "clean" items of clothing will be rewarded with a Topshop item and one left by another guest.

Other entertainment on offer includes lessons in Brazilian dance, a pool, a cafe on an island in the river that runs along the park, a games zone, a place by the river to read in quiet, as well as a series of academic lectures sponsored by the Polytechnical Museum, including one entitled "How to correctly trade in human kidneys."

For a more kid-friendly option, head to the children's entertainment zone.

Culinary delights not to be overlooked include tempura, paella, Finnish fish soup and barbecue, as well arguably the best hamburgers in Moscow, prepared by Delicatessen's chef Ivan Shishkin.

Afisha Picnic runs from noon till 10 p.m. on Saturday at Kolomenskoye, 39 Prospekt Andropova. Metro Kolomenskaya. Tickets are on sale for 1,500 rubles at concert.ru, parter.ru, ticketland.ru, redkassa.ru, at Concert.ru kiosks and at any Yevroset store. Children under 10 get in free. For more info, see picnic.afisha.ru.

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