

Ambient Rock Fest Full of International Names

By [Alec Luhn](#)

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Members of British band 65daysofstatic, the headliner of this year's Astral festival.

Muscovites will have a chance to turn on, tune in and drop out this weekend, escaping the commotion of the capital for atmospheric instrumental music at the Astral 3 festival.

Astral 3, which will be held Saturday and Sunday at the P!PL Club, is the third incarnation of the festival organized by local booking agency and record label Flowers Blossom In The Space. It's the biggest one yet, adding more international bands and taking the biannual event abroad for the first time with a tour stop in Kiev.

Although Astral's predominant flavor has been post-rock, the lineup embraces many types of music that achieve experimental and ambient sounds based mainly on rock instrumentation, ranging from post-metal to shoegaze.

The headliner this time around is British post-rock staple 65daysofstatic, which is making its

first appearance at the festival but its sixth in Russia.

"We'd heard of Astral fest previously, and coming to Russia is always cool. Seemed to make sense" to come for the event, the band said by email.

Astral 3 will see more countries represented in the lineup than ever before, alongside Russian acts Aesthesys, I Am Waiting For You Last Summer, and Powder! Go Away. The foreign contingent includes the downtempo- and trip-hop-influenced U.S. duo Lights Out Asia; Ukrainian ambient rockers The Best Pessimist; proggy European outfits Leech (Switzerland) and Alcet (France, one of the few bands with vocals); and the two-sided British band Maybeshewill, who jump between post-metal guitar riffs and almost maudlin piano melodies. Japanese post-rock elder statesmen Toe, whose chirpy mass of bell-like guitars and complex, staccato rhythms helped define a distinct approach to the genre, cap off the lineup.

The members of 65daysofstatic, who have been together for 11 years, almost as long as Toe, only commented on the lineup to say that they're looking forward to hearing new sounds.

"Most of the lineup is new to us," the band wrote. "There's lots of bands who have lots of syllables in their names. Not sure if we are to blame for that or not, but if we are: SORRY."

The British group, which has toured with The Cure, has made a relatively sizable impression on YouTube over the years with live clips and their music video for "Retreat! Retreat!" which cut rapidly in time with the music between various takes of the band's members rocking out in a rehearsal space. The band's sound blends rock and electronic styles, managing to interweave skittering electronic beats and bleeps with pounding guitar-driven rave-ups.

65daysofstatic will not play with a special video or light show, unlike many Astral bands, but will present a few new songs at the show, the band said.

This fall's festival will move from the previous venue of Club Milk to P!PL Club near metro station Paveletskaya, with a start time of 7 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday. Those hoping to see a favorite group may need to commit to several hours of music — the order of bands at the festival has not been announced.

Astral 3 is on Saturday and Sunday. 7 p.m. at P!PL Club. 20 Derbenevskaya Ulitsa, bldg. 10. 1,400 rubles (one-day ticket). Metro Paveletskaya. (495) 518-7972. fbits.ru.

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