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Jazz Stars to See Over the Holidays

By The Moscow Times

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Jaleel Shaw will play Christmas songs with a specially assembled group. **Gulnara Khamatova**

If you are looking to get into the mood for the festive season then head to a jazz concert this month. The Moscow Times looked through the schedules to pick out the best jazz events ahead of New Year's.

Erik Truffaz & DJ Tim Svodnik, Dec. 5, Emporio Cafe

Erik Truffaz is a Swiss-born French trumpeter and one of the pioneers of acid jazz, known for integrating electronic sounds into jazz harmonies with an intellectual approach. His original music, mostly released on the jazz record label no.1 Blue Note Records, often steps moves far away from jazz category mixing funky electronic rhythms with melancholic and poignant melodies like the legendary Miles Davis. Erik Truffaz has been involved in a great number of collaborations, and teaming up with a DJ is typical for him.

Al Jarreau, Dec. 12, Moscow International House of Music, Svetlanov Hall

Multi Grammy Award winning singer Al Jarreeau is back in Moscow. One of the greatest living jazz vocalists, Jarreau has a flexible approach to jazz, throwing in touches of r'n'b and pop. Jarreau, now in his 70s, is the only singer to have who won Grammies in those three different genres. He is expected to perform his arrangements of Christmas classics that appeared on his 2008 album Christmas.

Cinema Jazz Awards, Dec. 14, Igor Butman Club

The Cinema Jazz Awards, where bands improvise a soundtrack to a classic silent movie, will be held at the Igor Butman club. The winner is chosen by a jury, and a viewer's prize is also given. "In previous years we had all kinds of bands: tango, rock, and pop rock" says Roman Khristyuk, the contest's producer. "This time we decided to focus on jazz and show a variety of forms within the genre. There is the mainstream jazz band of Berklee graduate saxophonist Andrew Krasilnikov, and the band of the only Russian female trombone player, Alevtina Polyakova."

Jaleel Shaw and Ivan Farmakovsky trio, Dec. 18, Moscow International House of Music, Theater Hall

Philadelphia native Jaleel Shaw was the youngest musician to appear in the short-list of the Jazz Times Alto saxophonist of the Year award this year. Shaw, who performs as a regular member of the Fountain of Youth band — led by one of the greatest living jazz drummers, Roy Haynes — is in Moscow to perform both originals and jazz arrangements of famous Christmas songs with a Russian band assembled by pianist Ivan Farmakovsky. "I believe that above all genres, jazz music has adapted to this season in particular," he says. "There have been many jazz arrangements made for traditional Christmas songs. Some of my favorite Christmas songs were actually written by jazz composers, especially those by the great pianist Vince Guaraldi who contributed to The Peanuts and Snoopy cartoon series."

Fantine and Igor Butman Orchestra, Dec. 25, Moscow International House of Music, Svetlanov Hall

A rising star on the Australian pop scene, Fantine is a multilingual singer who gained recognition as a vocalist for the electronic band Space Invadas. Fantine has Russian roots and speaks Russian, and in Moscow will take the stage with the best big band of Moscow, the Igor Butman Jazz Orchestra. "As a lover of music as a whole and not just any specific genre, I have dabbled in most genres, including jazz," Fantine told The Moscow Times. "In fact, in college I focused on Jazz Performance. I like to think that music is about expressing the emotions conveyed in the song, which are intended to make the audience feel something — irrespective of whether the song is a jazz standard, or a pop song."

The Moscow International House of Music, 52-8 Kosmodamianskaya Naberezhnaya. Metro Paveletskaya. Tel. (495) 730-10-11, www.mmdm.ru

Igor Butman Club, 16A Ulansky Pereulok. Metro Chistiye Prudy. Tel. (495) 632-92-64, www.butmanclub.ru

Emporio Cafe, 18 1st Tverskoi-Yamskoi Pereulok. Metro Mayakovskaya. Tel. (495) 989-44-47, www.emporiocafe.ru

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