The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Gorky Park Shuts its Gates for Televised School Prom

By Simone Peek

June 19, 2013



As the old saying goes,"Hard work reaps great rewards." This was clearly the mentality of Moscow's department of education when they organized the 100-hectare "prom" for this year's high school graduates.

More than 52,000 students of Moscow and the Moscow region are to complete 11th grade as the 2012-13 academic year draws to a close. Thousands will attend.

"At the moment we are expecting around 7,000 guests, of which 5,500 are high school graduates, accompanied by around 1,000 supervisors," said general producer of the prom, Maxim Kazarnovsky.

"But the numbers are still changing, as graduates keep on registering," he added.

Their prom area will cover Gorky Park's vast grounds, which will be fenced off from the

general public.

Isaac Kalin, head of the Moscow education department, confirmed closure times to the Itar-Tass. "No later than 3 p.m. on June 23, Moscow's Gorky Park entry will be closed for visitors and independent vendors. Only the exit will continue to operate," he said.

Cafés and restaurants on the territory will stay in business, but won't, understandably, sell alcohol.

Celebrations begin at 10 p.m., leaving the park with some seven hours devoted to the preparing of an elaborate setting: The park is divided into spring, summer, fall and winter — each with themed activities and decorations.

Viktor Kramer, one of the creators of the popular Russian "Snow Show," was the mastermind behind the idea. He also had the brainwave of crowding the park's lanes with international street theater acts.

The French Compagnie Off street theater troupe will perform a circus skit and Australian troupe Strange Fruit will present a mixture of theater and dance from atop four-meter-high stilts. Soon-to-be ex-students will dance at an open air discotheque, attend a laser show, watch fireworks and see multiple musical acts.

Two Russian television channels will broadcast the event: TV Tsentr, which has the fourth-largest coverage area in Russia, and local channel Moscow-24.

The event's organization has been very strict, leaving no opportunity for the descent into chaos that might be expected from 10,000 teenagers joining together to celebrate the end of school.

"Organizers have taken unprecedented security measures," Kazarnovsky said. Students can only access the grounds when guided by a school supervisor. Other broad measures are in place.

"There will be two lines of security at the event....provided by the police department and private security companies. The entire park is under video surveillance and metal detectors will be installed at the entrance," Kazarnovsky stated.

The municipal graduation party has been annual event up until this year, but setting it in Gorky Park is a national first. Last year, it took place in on Red Square. Attendees said it was a great success.

"You won't regret it if you decide to come to Gorky Park this year," a former Moscow schoolgirl posted jubilantly on the event's Vkontakte page.

For more information please visit www.center-fest.ru/events/view/graduation-day.

Contact the author at artsreporter@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/06/19/gorky-park-shuts-its-gates-for-televised-school-prom-a25088