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# British Indie to Take Over Moscow Club

By Jennifer Monaghan

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Indie rockers Wild Beasts are the vanguard of a wave of British culture that will come to Moscow in the next year.

If there is one thing that Brits have perfected over the years — besides football chants, queuing, and a good cup of tea — it's music. Chris Talbot of the band Wild Beasts agrees: "The British tend to specialize in music — it's an export we do well," he told The Moscow Times ahead of a gig in the capital this Thursday.

"We've never performed in Russia before. We are very excited, it feels like an adventure for us," says Talbot, whose band will headline the Selector Live party, a British Council initiative, at Shestnadtsat Tonn. "From the eyes of a British boy from a small northern town, Moscow seems like an impossibly exotic and romantic place."

The radio show behind the gig, Selector, is a two-hour weekly program that promotes the very best of underground British music abroad. Transmitting from London, the show pulls an audience of more than three million people worldwide, and has been broadcasting in Russia since April this year; Wild Beasts have been given plenty of airtime by the show.

Not that the group haven't already established themselves in their own right. Describing themselves as an "avant-garde pop, baroque'n'roll, erotic downbeat, sensual alternative," the band's second album, "Two Dancers," was nominated for a British Mercury prize in 2010, but eventually lost out to another indie band, The xx. While one might expect the nomination to have been a career highlight, Talbot insists "it isn't healthy to judge a creative career on such quantifiable things."

As such a response may demonstrate, Wild Beasts can be described as something of musical intellectuals; their lyrics appear well-thought out, referencing — among others — the philosopher Aristotle and Russian writer Vladimir Nabokov.

"I do think [literature and music] cross-pollinate one another" says Talbot when asked about the group's lyrical inspiration. "Both express things that the other cannot. A song can speak of an emotion that a library worth of books could never quite capture; but a book can detail and play out that emotion in a way that even the best lyrics could never achieve."

As for bands, Talbot lists Talk Talk, The Blue Nile and Kate Bush as significant influences, "though we're also admirers of more modern artists like Oneohtrix Point Never and Clams Casino."

With a new album out next year, the band are looking forward to 2014: "It is an exciting time for us. New albums mean rebirths, reinventions and re-engagment with what we do. We took some time out ... now we're ready to take on whatever a the new record throws at us. Anyone within creative work must make their peace with oblivion, we don't ever fully know what is next, but console ourselves with the adventure of taking it on."

And if Wild Beasts have wet your appetite for all things British, then fear not — 2014 will offer plenty more opportunities to interact with U.K. culture. The British Council and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently announced that 2014 will see the biggest ever programme of U.K. cultural projects take place across Russia, as part of the 2014 U.K.-Russia Year of Culture.

*Wild Beasts headline Selector Live, 9 p.m. Thursday at 16 Tons, 6 Presnensky Val. Metro Ulitsa 1905 Goda. 499-253-5300. The Selector radio show broadcasts Sundays on Metropolis 89.5 FM.*

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