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U.K. Punk and Siberian Folk for Capital Christmas

By Katerina Azarova

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Buryat folk singer Namgar Lkhasaranova will lend her mesmerizing vocals to the “Nights of Siberia” festival.

I don't know about you, ladies and gentlemen, but I've caught myself humming "Jingle Bell Rock" a few times this week, which means one thing: Christmas is just around the corner and the festive spirit is slowly taking over. You probably have already decorated the tree and are planning to do some gift-shopping this weekend — but that doesn't mean you won't have time to catch a live show or two. We'll keep it light this weekend and set Sunday aside for family dinners, gift-wrapping and other Christmas-related activities, but that still leaves us with Friday and Saturday, so let's see what's on the agenda.

Friday is punk-rock day in the capital, and if you want in on the action, head on over to the Plan B club on Ulitsa Sovetskoi Armii. They are hosting something called Punk Rock New Year, with a great lineup of Russian punk bands taking to the stage, all headlined by British punk godfathers The Vibrators.

The Vibrators formed back in the 1970s and quickly rose to fame. They were one of the bands to play the legendary Roxy Club in London and later went on to support Iggy Pop on his 1977 British tour. Shortly after that, they signed on to Epic Records, one of Sony Music's three most prominent labels, along with Columbia and RCA. Their debut album, called Pure Mania, reached the top of the British album charts and was named one of the best punk albums of all time by the Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music — 17 years after its release. The band has been incredibly active, recording 16 original and three cover albums in their time together, and they still tour. This time around, they are gracing Moscow with their presence, so if you feel like rebelling against all things mainstream, brush up on your punk vocabulary and head on over to Plan B club. The concert starts at 7 p.m., so dress accordingly and go rock out!

Saturday will, as always, give you the most options in terms of concerts — everything from club to classical, and all you have to do is choose. Buddha Bar is opening its doors to Jazzanova, an amazing German DJ collective playing nu jazz, chill out and jazz house. They have released three studio records, and their tracks have featured on the most famous compilation albums in the world, like Cafe Del Mar and many others. So if you want to jazz things up, check out Buddha Bar — the set begins at 9 p.m. sharp.

Another famous DJ is in town this weekend — none other than Paul Van Dyk himself! He's taking over Stadium Live on Saturday, and it should be one incredible performance. The German DJ is incredibly popular in Russia, has won a number of Grammys, and has been named "World's Number 1 DJ" in both 2005 and 2006 — something very few have ever achieved. He started out and rose to fame with his hypnotic trance sounds, but has since decided that the genre is too specific and now states that he plays "electronic dance music" instead. Tickets start at just 800 rubles, so if you're a fan, Stadium Live is where you need to be this Saturday.

If you're looking for something new and different, however, there is only event in town for you this weekend — Nights of Siberia at the Moscow International House of Music. It's a unique festival combining ethnic music traditions of Siberia with new electronic sound, and it's all happening on the longest night of the year. This is your chance to feel the magic and experience music you have probably never heard before. One of the country's most prominent composers, Vladimir Martynov, will take to the stage together with a symphonic orchestra, and Buryat singer Namgar Lkhasaranova will lend her mesmerizing vocals to the performance. This really is a one-of-a-kind festival, so go and experience something new. The show starts at 10 p.m., and tickets start at 300 rubles — more than reasonable, especially for a chance to learn about ancient Siberian music traditions and see them reinterpreted in a modern way.

As you can see, even with Sunday off the agenda, there is still plenty to do and see in our fair capital. Next week is Christmas, and then New Year's Eve, which most of us choose to spend with friends or family, so this may well be your last concert-going weekend of 2013. My advice is, make the most of it — and have fun!

Katerina Azarova is a radio host at Moscow FM 105.2, Moscow's English-language radio station.

Contact the author at artsreporter@imedia.ru

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