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Maslenitsa Weekend in Moscow

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Composer Goran Bregovic will play some of his Balkan hits at Gorky Park.

Sunshine and pancakes: If you ask me, it doesn't get any better than that. That's what Moscow is all about this week, because it's Maslenitsa time! The delicious, gluttonous week of sweet and savory pancakes before Lent is finally upon us, and you should definitely take advantage of all the batter-related events in the city. But that doesn't mean you can't enjoy some live music as well, so let's take a look at who is in town this weekend.

Punk legend and no-wave pioneer Lydia Lunch is in town Friday, and that is not a performance you want to miss. Lunch burst onto the music scene back in the '70s and quickly transformed herself into an iconoclastic no-wave goddess by fronting the ultra-confrontational art-noise-rock revolutionaries Teenage Jesus and the Jerks. The band did not last very long, but Lunch made a name for herself and went on to rock the New York music world with 8-Eyed Spy. Years later, she continues to record albums and perform worldwide. Her latest record, called "Twist of Fate," came out in 2011 to critical acclaim, and now she is bringing her music to Moscow. Expect new tracks as well as all-time favorites from Lydia's time with Teenage Jesus and the Jerks. The gig starts at 8 p.m. at the Manifest Club,

and tickets start at 1,100 rubles. And here's a little bit of fan trivia for you: Lydia Lunch supposedly earned her name by stealing lunches from punk musicians!

Saturday is busy, as always, with something for everyone, from jazz to folk to hip-hop and heavy metal. The Teatr club is hosting a Runthebass night, with DJ Apache from Canada and DJ Snavs from Denmark spinning some dubstep and drum 'n' bass through the night. Pravda Club will be all about the techno and house music, with German DJ due Tiefschwarz taking over. They're no strangers to Moscow, but fans of the genre love their music, which ensures their frequent visits. The fun at Pravda starts at midnight, but you might want to get there a bit early to avoid the queues.

My choice for Saturday night, however, is simple: Morcheeba is in town again, and I wouldn't miss them for the world. Ever since original vocalist Skye Edwards returned to the fold four years ago, Morcheeba has reclaimed its status as one of the best British trip-hop pop-soul bands around, and they're bringing their latest album to Moscow. "Head Up High" came out in October 2013, and the first single off that album, "Gimme Your Love," is a mesmerizing, hypnotic track that proves the band still has plenty to offer. They're taking to the stage at Glavklub on Saturday, March 1. The concert starts at 8 p.m., so get your tickets now while they are still available and don't miss the show!

Now, there are plenty of Maslenitsa-themed festivals scheduled around town for this weekend, and most of them sound great. There's folk music at Hermitage Garden, classical music at the Tchaikovsky Museum and many more. But I think the most diverse program is at Gorky Park, where not only will you get to see all kinds of live performances, but also enjoy some pancakes, burn a traditional effigy and race ponycylces — whatever those may be, organizers are keeping this part a secret. Music-wise, you will get the chance to see Goran Bregovic, one of the most famous Balkan musicians and composers. Bregovic has written for a diverse group of musicians, from Iggy Pop to Cesaria Evora, and has composed three scores for world-famous film director Emir Kusturica. As well as some great folk music from the Balkans, you'll get to hear N.O.H.A. from Germany and Guru Groove Foundation, so go check out the Gorky Park festival this Sunday. It starts at 3 p.m., and is the perfect way to spend time with friends or family, enjoy Maslenitsa and listen to some live music all in one place. According to weather forecasts, it's going to be a sunny Sunday — perfect weather to spend the day in the park!

The bottom line is, this week is all about the things I enjoy most — great food and great music, so I'm definitely going to have a great weekend, and I hope you do as well! Happy pancake week, everyone!

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