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Italian Punk and Russian Jazz on Moscow Weekend

By Katerina Azarova

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Lively Italian punk band Vanilla Sky have previously toured with big names like NOFX, Good Charlotte, The Offspring and others and will play at Plan B.

It looks like we are finally firmly in the above-zero temperatures zone, ladies and gentlemen, which is a great thing, because it means winter is over! Admittedly, not for all the Game of Thrones fans, who have just begun watching season 4 of the much-lauded HBO series, but for the rest of us, winter is done. Time to venture outside, dust off those bikes or rollerblades, revel in the sunshine and, of course, catch a live show or two. So let's take a look at what's on the agenda for the weekend.

Friday night, despite not featuring any big names, will still offer plenty of gigs to see, depending on what you're after. If it is lively Italian punk rock, then Vanilla Sky is your band and Plan B club is your destination. These guys have been around since 2002 and have released four studio albums to date. They have toured the world and played with some big names in the industry, including NOFX, Good Charlotte, The Offspring and My Chemical

Romance. And here's a bit of fan trivia for you: a few years back, Vanilla Sky recorded a punk cover of Rihanna's "Umbrella," which got airtime across Europe and became one of the most watched videos on YouTube. The guys take to the stage at 7 p.m., so keep in mind that it's Friday and account for the traffic on your way there.

And if you want something a little smoother, then Cynthia Holliday and the Oleg Butman Trio is the concert for you — or you can take your love of jazz one step further and go check out the Cinema Jazz Awards — an annual event at the Igor Butman Jazz Club which sees four of the country's top jazz performers create soundtracks to silent films on the fly and battle for the main prize. The fun begins at 8:30 p.m., and the club is located by Chistiye Prudy.

Moscow's hottest clubs will be opening their doors on Saturday, as always — and promise a great night to all those who dare enter. The Flacon design factory is hosting an event called "Here and Now," featuring Entheogenic from Britain and Naibu from France, who will be playing trip-hop, ethno and trance beats all through the night. Space Moscow, Space Ibiza's little sister, is bringing the flavor of the island over, with Spain's Danny Markez, Britain's Above and Beyond and Germany's Cosmic Gate working together to transport you to that sunny island.

Over at Arma 17, the club's second-last event, "Space Love," will on Saturday showcase contemporary visual art and electronic music and sees Atom™, Fennesz and one of the fathers of minimal techno, Mika Vainio of Finnish duo Pan Sonic playing live sets alongside New York duo Taimur & Fahad and many other DJs.

My personal choice for Saturday is simple — Kosheen are in town and when Kosheen are in town, I go see them. This Bristol-based trip-hop and breakbeat band has been around since the late 1990s and continue to make great music. They rose to fame with two tracks off their first album; "Hide U" and "Catch," and have since recorded four more albums, touring last year in support of their latest release, "Independence."

Just a few months back, they released a new single, which has caused fans to speculate a fifth album might be on its way. A chance to hear brand-new, never-before-heard tracks is all the more reason to go see Kosheen play, but seriously, they always put on a great show and you won't regret seeing them live. This time around, they are taking on GlavClub, which is one of the city's main concert venues — and that just goes to show Kosheen is planning something special for their Moscow-based fans and you shouldn't miss their gig. They take to the stage at 8 p.m., and tickets are still available, so don't miss your chance.

There's nothing concert-wise that really stands out on Sunday, to be perfectly honest, but the weather promises to be good, so I thought I'd let you have the day to yourselves, go to Gorky or Sokolniki Park, ride your bike around town and generally remind yourselves of what it feels like to voluntarily spend more than 20 minutes outdoors. Or you can always visit the City Food Festival at Sokol, which is exactly what I plan on doing this Sunday, being a huge foodie. Most importantly, have some fun and enjoy the weekend!

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