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Giles Bringing Back the Blues to Moscow

By Peter Beck

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Blues guitarist Danny Giles is set to play four shows in Moscow this week.

Blues rocker Danny Giles, playing this weekend in Moscow, is starting to make a habit of coming to Russia's capital city.

Giles' first brought his thick, guitar-heavy sound from England to Russia in May, treating audiences to original music and covers in his classic, Jimi Hendrix-influenced style. This time he'll be promoting his new record, "More Is More," and it's clear that the "more" in this case is a natural follow on from his appearances back in May.

"I very much enjoyed my first visit," he told The Moscow Times. "The shows were fantastic and very well received."

Giles' appearance then was backed up by two musicians he'd never even met before: drummer Ilya Lipatov and bass player Vasily Rogozhin.

But despite not even rehearsing, "the guys just jumped straight in," Giles explains. "The guys

had such a sensitivity for the music. ... We had some genuinely great spontaneous moments on stage."

Giles will appear in Moscow courtesy of Boris Litvintsev, the man behind the ongoing "Great British Rhythm 'n' Blues Invasion" in Moscow this year and the organizer of the upcoming gigs.

Despite the occasional economic difficulties involved, Litvintsev is passionate about bringing good music to Moscow, in particular Giles'. "Danny's music and musicianship deserve to be promoted in more venues and cities in Russia," Litvintsev told The Moscow Times.

Giles, who first started playing guitar at age 8, lists his main influences as "the arena rock bands of the time — Guns 'n' Roses, Bon Jovi, Van Halen."

"My father was a very keen music lover and had a huge influence on my early listening. I heard a lot of blues and soul, and it didn't take long for me to make the connection between rock and blues. I am a music fanatic."

All Giles' musical scholarship, as well as his technical skill and powerful approach, is on display in the set lists he has planned for the upcoming gigs. Along with original material, he'll be offering his take on classics from "Muddy Waters to Jimi Hendrix to Johnny 'Guitar' Watson." And he'll be glad to be back in Russia to do so, no matter how the outside perception of Russia has changed in the interim.

"When I was asked if I would like to return, I didn't hesitate," he said. "I cannot lie and tell you that recent events haven't crossed my mind, but I'm really not politically motivated as an artist. ... All of my personal experiences [in Russia] were so very positive that it was an easy choice to make."

"I like to make up my own mind and experience the world myself," Giles said by way of a summary, and whether he's talking about what or where he plays, the benefits of that openness will be felt this weekend in Moscow.

Thursday — solo, Chinese Pilot Jao Da, 25 Lubyansky Proyezd.

Friday at 8:30 p.m. — with CrossroadZ, B.B. King Blues Club, 4 Sadovaya-Samotechnaya Ulitsa, Bldg. 2.

Friday at 11:30 p.m. — band, China-Town Cafe, 25 Lubyansky Proyezd.

Sunday — with the Mikhail Kistanov blues trio, B.B. King Blues Club (see address above).

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