

Mix the City Launches in Moscow

By [Ruth Moore](#)

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Pixelord records his mix on the Brusov Ship **British Council**

What does your Moscow sound like? The honk of angry car horns, the whirl of the metro escalator, the scrape of spades clearing the snow in winter or the hits from the 1990s your taxi driver plays as you thread through the evening traffic? Mix the City, a global digital platform created by the British Council, has found a rather creative answer to the question.✕

The online project invites you to create your own musical cityscape by remixing recordings of contemporary Russian musicians playing in different locations around the capital. The performance samples are cut against clips of recognizable urban backdrops, allowing you to create a video tapestry of the sounds and sights you love best in Moscow.✕

“At the heart of the project is the idea of a resource with which you can not only be creative, but also open yourself up to other cultures,” says Emmanuel Witzthum, the creator of Mix the City, which originally launched in Tel Aviv before expanding to the Balkans, Istanbul, Mannheim and now Moscow.✕✕

There are some big names on board. The 2 Bears, a British musical duo comprised of Joe Goddard (of electronic band Hot Chip) and Raf Rundell, are curating the Moscow platform. Performing artists include Naadia — an indie-pop band fronted by Nadia Gritskevich — gusli player Olga Glazova, opera singer Mikhail Petrenko and beat makers Kovsh Beats. The eclectic mix of modern music styles with traditional Russian folk instruments and classical musicians is entirely deliberate. ☒☒

“I think a really interesting way of getting an idea of how a city sounds. All the way up and down: from Pixielord who’s working on a laptop and an ableton controller to Yury Bashmet playing a Stradivarius viola,” says Raf Rundell.

Each of the musicians created their sample in a different landmark: some historical, others simply culturally significant. Mikhail Petrenko’s deep bass voice reverberates off the walls of Mayakovskaya metro station while Playtronica perform on the steps of VDNKh. From Soviet monuments to Orthodox churches and hip party-spots, the venues offer an interesting study of Moscow’s urban environment.

Peter Theremin, a theremist, composer and the great-grandson of Leon Theremin, the creator of the eponymous electronic musical instrument, used the acoustics of the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. “This wonderful project enables you to recreate the diverse characteristics of Moscow’s musical landscape,” says Theremin.

The musician, whose unusual instrument might be unfamiliar to some audiences, also saw the educational benefits of the program. “I believe that the theremin is perhaps the most original Russian instrument. And it is very interactive, responsive and modern despite the fact it was created nearly 100 years ago. Mix the City is a multifaceted platform and of course the educational element is very important.”

Be it based on the hypnotic sounds of Naadia or the neo-folk elements of Synecdoche Montauk, once users have created their mix, they can share it with friends via social media platforms. The hope is that the mixes will provide an important cultural insight into Moscow’s cityscape, musical heritage and blossoming contemporary music scene.

“I like Mix the City Tel Aviv and Mix the City Istanbul, because they’re both cities I know well, but I love Mix the City Moscow because I live here, and the diversity of the musicians, and the locations in which we recorded them, captures something of the soul of Moscow,” says Michael Bird, director of the British Council in Russia.

Why not try it for yourself? Create your own mix at mixthecity.com ☒

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