

Musical Moscow: A Summer of Festivals

Head outside and hear the music.

By [Andrei Muchnik](#)

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Usadba Jazz is one of the oldest Moscow music festivals. [andrekson.ru](#) / **Usadba Jazz**

In 2013, Moscow suddenly became a major festival hub. Every year there seem to be more festivals in more places — from rooftops to riverboats — with foreign and local musicians performing music of all kinds, from mellow jazz to good ole rock ‘n roll. If you live in Moscow, this might be a good year to take your vacation in the fall. If you don’t, it might be a great season to visit.

Usadba Jazz: June 22–23

One of the oldest Moscow festivals, Usadba Jazz will not be held at the Arkhangelskoye estate this year for the first time. Instead, the main jazz event of the summer will take place at Kolomenskoye park, a former royal estate complete with palaces and churches, on another bank of the Moscow River. This year festival-goers will be able to see Michael Kiwanuka, a rising star of British soul music and a Mercury award nominee, hip-hop diva from Harlem

Azealia Banks, 1990s band making a comeback the Black-Eyed Peas and Ivan Dorn, one of the pioneers of ukr-pop, with jazz and funk renditions of his greatest hits.

39 Prospekt Andropova. Metro Kolomenskoye. usadba-jazz.ru

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Bosco Fresh Fest: June 29

Bosco Fresh Fest is one of the regular Moscow festivals that moves to a new venue every year. This year it will take place in the grounds of the Palace of Pioneers, which used to be the young pioneers' HQ back in Soviet times and is a great example of Soviet modernist architecture. The main headliners this year are James Blake, one of today's leading electronic musicians and a Mercury prize winner from Britain, and Roisin Murphy, formerly one half of the legendary English-Irish band Moloko, who launched quite a successful solo career after the band's break-up. The lineup also includes dream pop band Still Corners and On-The-Go, one of Moscow's leading English language indie bands.

17 Ulitsa Kosygina. Metro Vorobyovy Gory. boscofreshfest.com

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Bol: July 5-7

Bol (Pain) started as a low-key alternative festival a few years ago and grew into one of the major music events of the summer. For the second year in a row, it will take place in and around ZIL Cultural Center, a constructivist masterpiece designed by the Vesnin brothers in the 1930s. The headliner is The Good, the Bad & the Queen, a supergroup put together by Blur's front-man, Damon Albarn. You'll also be able to see American indie rockers Cloud Nothings, alternative electronic musician SOPHIE from the U.K., new Ukrainian pop star Dakooka and about a dozen indie Russian musicians, including Pasosh, GSh (formerly known as Glintshake), and Aigel, an electronic hip-hop duet from Tatarstan.

4 Ulitsa Vostochnaya, Bldg. 1. Metro Avtozavodskaya. bolfest.com

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Lastochka: July 6

Lastochka is a one-day festival that takes place on the same weekend as Bol and is a good alternative if you are more into mainstream popular music. Lastochka, which means "swallow" in Russian, will take place at the Luzhniki sports complex on the river embankment. The headliners are up-and-coming American rapper Lil Xan, named after — you guessed it — Xanax, and LP, a Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter of Italian descent and a regular guest in Moscow. Other highlights include Little Big, a Russian rave music band that's gaining popularity in Europe, Rompasso, a rising star on the Russian electronic scene, and all kinds of sports and games.

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Park Live: July 12–14

This year Park Live will take place in Moscow's best-known park — Gorky — for the second year in a row. The headliners are Thirty Seconds to Mars, an indie rock band fronted by actor Jared Leto and a regular at Moscow festivals, English singer-songwriter Rag'n'Bone Man known for his smash hit “Human,” Die Antwoord, a white electronic rap act from South Africa singing in a mix of English and Afrikaans and MØ, a Danish electronic dance music act who released her second album last fall.

9 Krymsky Val. Metro Park Kultury. park.live

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Midsummer Night's Dream: July 20

Rise Entertainment, the team known for throwing the most talked-about parties in Moscow, is bringing back its original summer event: A Midsummer Night's Dream. This year the party will take place on several boats bringing the exquisitely costumed party to “Terra Incognita” for the main event. Stages with leading international DJs will be organized both on the boats and in the grounds of “Terra Incognita.” The lineup is to be announced soon, check the Facebook page for more details: <https://www.facebook.com/events/235130084106779/>

Forma: July 27–28

Forma is more of a performing arts festival than a run-of-the-mill music festival. Nevertheless, the headliners include Philipp Gorbachev, who is one of those Russian electronic musicians better known abroad than inside the country. Also performing will be Pyotr Mamonov, who is one of Russia's few remaining perestroika rock veterans, American garage rockers The Black Lips and Sonic Death, a Russian band that plays a cross between garage rock and post-punk. The organizers also promise performances and physical and street theater, including a collaboration between Maxim Didenko, one of Moscow's leading theater directors and an unnamed pop band. This year Forma will take place at creative cluster Khlebozavod.

1 Ulitsa Novodmitrovskaya. Metro Novodmitrovskaya.formafestival.ru

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Afisha Picnic: August 3

Afisha Picnic, the festival that started it all, is not one for changing traditions. This year it will once again take place at its usual spot in historical Kolomenskoye Park. This year's headliner

is The Cure, one of the bands that shaped rock and pop music as we know it today. Other highlights include American rapper Pusha T, rock duo Royal Blood, relative newcomers from the U.K. Blossoms, and SBPCh, an indie pop band from St. Petersburg. There will also be a whole stage organized by Russia's most prominent rap label Gazgolder, showcasing all their talent including the label's founder Basta, along with Skryptonite and Matrang.

39 Prospekt Andropova. Metro Kolomenskoye. <https://picnic.afisha.ru/>

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Mosaic Music: All Summer

Mosaic Music is not exactly a festival, but rather a series of concerts spread over the summer that all take place in the Atrium in the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. This year the museum launches on June 5 the fourth season of Mosaic Music with a concert from Kamasi Washington, a well-known American jazz and hip-hop musician. Mosaic Music continues on July 4 with a concert by Charlotte Gainsbourg, who's better known as an actress but has also produced several albums. The final event is an August 8 concert by British electronic duo HONNE.

9 Krymsky Val. Metro Oktyabrskaya. garagemca.org

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Roof Fest: All Summer

Roof Fest is a series of concerts that will take place on the roofs of the various clubs of Red October island, Moscow's night-life hub. The highlights this season include pop rock veterans Tantsy Minus, who play Fantomas on June 13, and Manizha — the star of intellectual pop music who started out as a self-promoted Instagram sensation — playing Gipsy on June 30. You can find more information on dates and roofs on the festival [site](#).

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