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## All That Famous Jazz at the Hermitage Garden

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By Alexandra Odynova / Special to The Moscow Times

Every jazz fan knows that the last weekend in August is the best time to hear favorite music performed live by top musicians. As the summer draws to a close, the 11th annual, three-day international jazz festival gets under way in the Hermitage Garden on Friday.

The event has already become well known not only in Russia, but also abroad, with its range of up-and-coming acts performing alongside famous stars. This year's top attractions include acclaimed musicians such as saxophonist Craig Handy, pianist Larry Willis and George Colligan from the United States, the most famous Austrian jazzman Karl-Heinz Miklin and Polish pianist Adam Makovich.

Russian jazz bands and musicians, such as Igor Butman, Yevgeny Revnyuk, Anastasia Glazkova, Crazy Rhythm and Laber Band, will also perform at the festival, many of them not for the first time.

The event's venue, the Hermitage Garden, is a popular venue of jazz festivals and concerts. "The place has a fine, intellectual aura," said Michael Green, the festival's art director and chief producer.

The organizers promise a special opening this year. The director of the jazz department at the University of Louisville, Michael Tracy, will open the festival with a group of Gnessin Musical College students, whom he has supervised during their internship in the United States.

The first jazz concert in Russia took place in Moscow in 1922, but, dubbed "capitalist" by Stalin, it was banned during the Soviet period. The popularity of jazz has increased most noticeably in the last decade, as Moscow has hosted dozens of concerts by many of the genre's most acclaimed musicians.

The first jazz festival in the Hermitage Garden was held in 1997. "I attended an open-air concert for the first time in Nice in 1994, soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union," Green said. "I was shocked by the free and democratic atmosphere there. Since then, I wanted to arrange something similar in Russia."

It was the first open-air jazz festival in Moscow and attracted thousands of visitors. Around 80,000 people have visited the festival over the 10 years of its existence in Moscow, and this year the organizers expect more than 8,000 visitors.

And Green is confident that the recent spate of good weather will continue over the festival weekend. "We have consulted with the forecasters," he said. "The weather is always fine at our festival."

*"Jazz in the Hermitage Garden" will run from Fri. to Sun. from 5 p.m. at the Hermitage Garden, located at 3 Karetny Ryad. Metro Tverskaya. Tel. 699-08-49. [www.mosgorsad.ru](http://www.mosgorsad.ru), [www.mgreen-jazz.ru](http://www.mgreen-jazz.ru). Tickets will be sold at the garden on the day of the event from 3 p.m. and cost 700 rubles.*



Sergei Samoilov / For MT

Jazz fans enjoying a concert at the Hermitage Garden last year. The director of the University of Louisville jazz department will open this year's event on Friday.