

Russian and UK Music Industries in Focus at Selector Pro

By [Timothy Misir](#)

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One of the most anticipated events of the festival is the Selector Live closing concert, where Darren Cunningham will perform with the London Contemporary Orchestra **Tom D. Morgan**

If you've ever thought about starting your own record label or putting on your own concert, Selector Pro, kicking off today, is where you'll find the information about how to do it, and where you'll find the people to do it with. The festival organized by British Council Russia is focused on nurturing emerging talent, providing guidance and advice for industry professionals, and building ties between the Russian and the UK music industries.

A full program of workshops, public talks, film screenings and performances is planned for the event, which takes place Thursday through Saturday. Music industry professionals will discuss all aspects of the business, from the ins and outs of running a record label in the 21st century, to how new technologies are changing music search and listening habits.

A Platform for Collaboration

Selector Pro — which has evolved from the British Council’s Selector radio show and its Selector Live parties — provides a platform for both UK and Russian musicians and industry professionals to learn from and work with one another, particularly as Russian musicians are gaining far more exposure and recognition abroad than ever before.

“We believe in music and its strong power to unite people,” British Council Russia head of creative economy Evgenia Gerasimova said. “Just like our first forum held last year, we are looking forward to bringing people together to share their experience and will provide our guests with a unique insight into the latest music industry trends.”

Speaking to The Moscow Times, Stepan Kazaryan, founder of gig promoters Connected Agency and organizer of music festivals like Bol’ and Moscow Music Week, said the growing interest Russian bands from abroad should come as no surprise.

“Russian musicians are finally producing good music, and more importantly, they’re unique”, he said, citing St. Petersburg alternative band Pinkshinyultrablast, which has received rave reviews from the British press and is far more popular in the UK than at home in Russia.

“It is because there is cultural and social engagement reflected in the music. We are seeing a generation of musicians who are not trying to copy, but are instead producing something authentic,” Kazaryan, who is speaking on the panel “This Will Be Legendary: How to Create the Mythology of an Artist” on Saturday, said.

Lectures, Screenings and Workshops

Opening the festival today is the lecture “How to Speak About Music” by Russian music critic Artemy Troitsky, followed by a Beat Film Festival screening of the documentary “The Man from Mo’Wax”, which follows the 30-year career of DJ and music industry icon James Lavelle and his MoWax record label. The film will be presented by its director Matthew Jones and producer M.J. McMahon.

Among the festival’s other highlights is a talk by John Robb, frontman of post-punk band The Membranes and founder of music website and magazine Louder Than War, who will speak about the stories that were compiled in his bestselling book “Punk Rock: An Oral History” on Friday.

The following evening, music historian Simon Reynolds will revisit themes from his 2011 book “Retromania: Pop Culture’s Addiction to Its Own Past,” which was translated into Russian in 2015.

There will also be two music management workshops, one aimed at beginners and the other for professional music managers, conducted by British & Irish Modern Music Institute senior tutor Daniel Tsu.

An Experimental Performance

The highlight for music fans will undoubtedly be the Selector Live closing concert, a unique collaborative performance by British electronic musician Darren Cunningham — better known by his stage moniker Actress — and the London Contemporary Orchestra (LCO).

Artistic directors Robert Ames and Hugh Grant founded the ensemble of young musicians in 2008. Since then, LCO has been involved in numerous cross-genre collaborations, and is best known for featuring on the soundtrack to Paul Thomas Anderson's 2012 film "The Master" and for performing arrangements on Radiohead's album "A Moon Shaped Pool", released in May.

The performance "Momentum" is based around tracks from a pair of Actress albums that combine elements of techno, funk and ambient music, "R.I.P." (2012) and "Splazsh" (2010), as well as new material.

"We were really excited by Darren's sense of experimentation. As soon as we were introducing musicians to him he was searching for sounds at the extremities of the instruments", Ames said. "Challenges have come from trying to find a real blend between electronic sound and acoustic sound. We have been trying to create a hybrid instrument between the two worlds instead of keeping them separate."

The collaboration is scored for a chamber line-up of four strings, clarinet, prepared piano, percussion and harp, but the musicians do not follow a score, improvising and using a wide variety of props. Previous performances have seen the use of plastic bags, fabric, clothes pegs, Blu-Tack and metro cards – while Cunningham manipulates their output signals.

"Basically, if you work in the music industry or generally interested in music, you can find something interesting at Selector Pro — to learn, to listen to and to watch," Gerasimova said.

Selector Pro takes place from 21-23 July at Strelka Institute of Media, Architecture and Design. 14/5 Bersenevskaya Naberezhnaya. Metro Kropotkinskaya. Events, apart from the film screening and closing concert, are free of charge. Registration in advance is required. Visit www.britishcouncil.ru for more information.

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