

YUVAL RON ENSEMBLE CONCERT TOUR To Russia 2020

October 4 – October 14, 2020

DAY 1, Sunday, October 4, 2020

Fly to Moscow.

Depart your origin city on time to arrive in Moscow in the afternoon of Mon Oct 5.

DAY 2, Monday, October 5, 2020

TBD am ~ Arrive and Meet in Moscow International Airport, Moscow.

Our tour guide and tour operator will wait for you at the airport to greet you and to bring you to our hotel to settle in, and rest from your journey.

At 6:30pm - depart the hotel for early dinner in a hotel restaurant and **an orientation meeting** led by **Yuval Ron and members of his Ensemble**. After dinner we will enjoy a **night time driving tour of the beautiful city of Moscow**, known for its distinctive richly decorated Russian architecture, along with many modern European style buildings. The bus sight seeing tour will conclude at the hotel where we will have a restful night.

DAY 3, Tuesday, October 6, 2020

After delicious breakfast at the hotel, we will depart to a visit the world famous attractions of Moscow: the **Kremlin** and the Red Square. Entering the **Red Square** from the north, we will be passing landmarks such as the Bolshoi Theatre and Duma parliament building, the Voskresensky Gates, and the iconic **St. Basil's Cathedral**, whose colorful, onion-shaped domes are the symbol of Russia worldwide. After a visit to the Kremlin, lunch on your own in one of the local restaurants and then continue exploring the Kremlin district including the official Kremlin museum, the **Armory Museum**, which is the home for some of the treasures and jewels of the Russian imperial past. At the end of the day, we will dine in a traditional Russian restaurant with **live musicians and singers performing traditional Russian music**. After dinner, we will return to the hotel for a restful night.

DAY 4, Wednesday, October 7, 2020

After delicious breakfast at the hotel, we will visit the city's largest and best known flea market, the district of **Izmaylovo**. The area is a maze of shops where you can get just about anything: from handmade items to Soviet antiquities. Delve into the bargains, rifle through the artisan crafts, admire the local handiwork and be tempted by the silky smooth

traditional fur hats. Expect walls of *matryoshka* dolls, fascinating Soviet memorabilia, and glittering handcrafted jewelry. When tired of exploring the market, head up to one of Izmailovsky market's cafés for a warming mulled wine and a delicious lunch on your own. In the afternoon, we will visit a traditional Russian Arts and Crafts studio to meet a master artist, **for an exclusive meeting and conversation about their family history and the origins and the meaning of their art and craft.**

In the evening, we will visit **Igor Butman Jazz club**, one of Moscow's well-known Jazz clubs, for a dinner and a jazz show. While Jazz was adored and then banned in the Soviet times, it has endured in Russia since the 1930's, in spite of all the prohibitions and attacks. Tonight, we will visit the jazz club of one of the champions of Jazz in Russia, **Igor Butman**. A graduate of Berklee School of Music in Boston, as is Yuval Ron, Igor is a Russian jazz saxophonist, who holds dual citizenship for both the USA and Russia and is considered to be a virtuoso saxophonist, a skilled bandleader, and the founder of the Russian Jazz Festival, "The Triumph of Jazz." Former US president Bill Clinton has called Butman, "my favorite living saxophone player." Return to the hotel for a restful night.

DAY 5, Thursday, October 8, 2020

After breakfast, we will visit the **Moscow Choral Synagogue**, Russia's largest and oldest synagogue. It houses the main Rabbinate of Russia, as well as the higher religious school of Yeshiva. This synagogue is named as Choral Synagogue because the service is led by a group of cantors – a small choir that sings prayer. This morning we will be treated to an **exclusive meeting with the synagogue leaders, and witness chanting of Jewish prayers by members of the Yuval Ron Ensemble, while Yuval Ron will share stories from the rich history of the synagogue.**

You will enjoy lunch on your own at a **restaurant of Jewish cuisine at the synagogue** and visit the library and bookstore. After lunch we will have free time for shopping and sightseeing, while the Yuval Ron Ensemble will be going to the sound check for their evening premier concert in Moscow.

In early evening, you will witness the historic **premier concert of the Yuval Ron Ensemble in Russia**, followed by an **exclusive festive late dinner with the Ensemble members to share feelings and observations of the concert, post-concert celebrations, and wine toasting.** Then we will return to the hotel for a restful night.

DAY 6, Friday, October 9, 2020

After delicious breakfast, we will visit the iconic **Cathedral of Christ the Savior**, the second tallest Orthodox Christian church in the world. It was in this cathedral that the 1882 world premiere of the *1812 Overture* composed by Tchaikovsky took place. The cathedral was destroyed in 1931 on the order of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and was rebuilt during the 1990's. After the visit to the cathedral, we will continue on to visit **Old Arbat** – one of the oldest streets of Moscow, and an old market area. After lunch on your own, in one of the local restaurants, we will have free time to wander around and explore this historic center

of Moscow. In the evening, we will be treated to a **dinner on a cruise boat on a Moscow River**. Enjoy a traditional Russian dinner and a beautiful night view of Moscow's historical buildings & sites. After the boat journey we will return to the hotel for a restful night.

DAY 7, Saturday, October 10, 2020

After breakfast, we will go to the Moscow Train Station, to take the fast train to **St. Petersburg**, a Russian port city on the Baltic Sea. Being the imperial capital for 2 centuries, St Petersburg was founded in 1703 by Peter the Great, and is Russia's cultural center and most beautiful city. On the way, we will have lunch on the train (buy or bring your own), and enjoy the country side landscapes through the windows and meeting Russian people inside the train. In the afternoon, we will arrive at our hotel, check in, and then ride our tour bus for a guided bus tour of the city to view some of the splendid architectural gems of St. Petersburg.

In the evening, we will be treated to a dinner **at a traditional Russian restaurant with live music, presenting tradition folkloric music and dance of Russia**. After dinner, we will return to the hotel for a restful night.

DAY 8, Sunday, October 11, 2020

Following breakfast at the hotel, we will visit the world famous **Peterhof Palace**, which is a series of palaces and gardens commissioned by Peter the Great. **An UNESCO world heritage site**, Peterhof's fountains operate without the use of pumps. Water is supplied from natural springs, and collects in reservoirs in the Upper Gardens. The elevation difference creates the pressure that drives most of the fountains of the Lower Gardens, including the Grand Cascade. After exploring the wonders of the Palaces and gardens, we will enjoy lunch provided by our tour operator in a local restaurant and then continue to **an exclusive dance workshop of folkloric dance**. We will get a chance to learn some steps, dance with the local professional dancer/choreographer, and to talk with the choreographer about the history and meaning of the dance style. In the evening, we will be treated to **an exclusive dinner and a local Klezmer (Jewish East European music) concert** by the band *Shpil Klezmer Band* at the **Grand Choral Synagogue of St. Petersburg**. Enjoy a **gourmet menu of the kosher restaurant Le'chaim**, the home of the finest gourmet cuisine head-chef and the best East-European Jewry cuisine traditions. Dance and sing to the joyful music of the band, meet the musicians, hear their stories, and **witness the Yuval Ron Ensemble members sitting in and jamming with one of Russia's finest Klezmer band**. After the feast, we will go back for a restful night at the hotel.

DAY 9, Monday, October 12, 2020

After breakfast, we will visit the third-largest synagogue in Europe, The Grand Choral Synagogue of St. Petersburg, a registered landmark and an architectural monument in Russia. After lunch on your own in a local restaurant, we will return to the hotel for rest and preparation for an early evening event: the **Yuval Ron Ensemble concert in St Petersburg**. After the concert, **enjoy a festive dinner with members of the Yuval Ron Ensemble to share emotions and observations of the concert, and to celebrate together**. After the late dinner, we will return to the hotel for a restful night.

DAY 10, Tuesday, October 13, 2020

After breakfast, we will visit the second-largest art museum in the world, **Hermitage Museum**, and then the magnificent **Palace Square**, which forms the heart of historical St. Petersburg. Surrounded by some of the city's most magnificent buildings, it is an architectural showcase and one of the iconic attractions in the city. We will continue then to visit the most famous street in Russia, **Nevsky Prospekt**, which is renowned for its fine architecture, famous residents, palaces, churches, monuments, along with shops and restaurants. We will have lunch (on your own) in one of the local restaurants and spend the afternoon in last minute shopping and free exploration of the magnificent city of St. Petersburg. In the evening, we will **have a farewell dinner party at a local restaurant, with open mic, sharing and jamming with the members of the Yuval Ron Ensemble and all members of our tour group**.

DAY 11, Wednesday, October 14

After delicious breakfast, we will check out of the hotel and drive to the airport to fly back home. **Make sure you book your return flight home from St. Petersburg and NOT from Moscow! Instead of round trip ticket, you will need to buy two separate one-way tickets – the first one, to Moscow, arriving on Oct 5, and the second one, departing from St. Petersburg on Oct 14.**

Please note: This is a draft itinerary for planning purposes and is still subject to change between now and our travel dates.