2012 English-Russian project *The Mathew Herbert Russian Big Band*

by Ivan Baryshnikov

For more information see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKw5RdOCwhA

This summer I was in London. I was involved in a great English-Russian project called *The Mathew Herbert Russian Big Band*.

It was British Council's idea to take part in *The River Festival* in London, which had been held one week before The Olympic Games, where different countries presented their culture through music.

Mathew Herbert is an electronic musician, composer and Dj. To carry out the project he traveled to Russia, visited museums, galleries, studied the history of Russian music. He recorded the voices of children and old men and folk songs over the telephone. All this things he used in his performances.

Our tour lasted 3 days. On the first day we arrived at the Heathrow Airport and then we went to the hotel, which locates in the center of London at Virginia station. This day I could visit Portobello Market. It is a place in London, where you can buy any old, retro and antique things. I bought rare vinyls of Michael Brecker and John Coltrane there.

The next day we had the only rehearsal before the performance. After the rehearsal we were interviewed by some Russian TV journalists.

The last day of our tour came. The event took place on the Trafalgar Square. We went there by bus. We had no soundcheck before our performance, so we just took some advice from Mathew and went to the stage. There were about 10,000 listeners there. It was great to play for a big crowd of people in the square. I performed some solos in the set and Mathew recorded my sound and sampled it in real time, it was awesome! Also he recorded the singing crowd and used it in his music. The music we played was the quintessence of jazz, pop, dance and electronic music. All compositions are written by Mathew Herbert and it is his original creative project.

It was the first tour that impressed me so much, and when I'm recalling London, some special melodies start playing in my mind.