

Where to Hear Music in 2018

On the calendar: Blues in Canada, rock in Ireland and Afropunk in South Africa.



Guns N' Roses at Slane Castle in 2017. Steve Dempsey/Down the Barrel Photography

By Shivani Vora Jan. 11, 2018

Where will the sounds of music take travelers in 2018? The destination may depend on your favorite song, but whether that means jazz, Afropunk, rock or another rhythm entirely, there's definitely a place to go.

For blues fans, the [Tremblant International Blues Festival](#) (July 6 to 15), in the village of Mont Tremblant, in Canada, is celebrating its 25th anniversary in a big way. The 10 days of festivities will include more than 100 indoor and outdoor concerts — most of them free — from both blues legends and emerging musicians from around the world. And for festivalgoers seeking a more intimate immersion into the blues, the event includes several freestyle jam sessions at restaurants and bars around town.

Despite the name, it's not only about jazz: the music and cultural party known as the [New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival](#) (April 27 to May 6) is going all out for the Big Easy's Tricentennial in 2018 with performances from over 500 bands, playing virtually every style of music. The lineup for this year is still in the works, but it's likely to be as diverse as in the past when artists have included Bruce Springsteen, Pearl Jam, Snoop Dogg and Louisiana locals Trombone Shorty and Dr. John.

It's also a big year — the 60th, to be exact — for [Festival di Spoleto](#) (June 29 to July 15), in Spoleto, in Italy's Umbria region. The event includes more than 100 classical and opera concerts at venues around town, and the opening night show of the tragic opera "Jeanne d'Arc au Bucher" by Arthur Honegger, held in the grand Piazza del Duomo, is a way to get into the listening mood.

If moving to rock is more your speed than the sounds of classical or opera, head to Ireland for the annual concert at the 18th-century [Slane Castle](#) (May), north of Dublin and home to a whisky distillery, Slane Irish Whisky. The event attracts more than 80,000 spectators, and it's not hard to see why: Rock 'n' roll royalty have performed in past years, from Guns 'n' Roses and Bon Jovi to Eminem and Kings of Leon. The 2018 band has yet to be announced, but a star name is practically guaranteed.

The dancing is sure to be as much fun at [Vivid Music](#), part of the 10th annual [Vivid Sydney](#) (May 25 to June 16), a festival dedicated to light, music and ideas. The vibrant contemporary music showcases artists known for breaking the mold — Björk, Anohni, Morrissey and Lauryn Hill have performed in previous years. The musicians hold concerts in intimate spaces around the city as well as the grandest of ones including, of course, the Sydney Opera House.

From contemporary tunes to more traditional ones: [Celtic Connections](#) (Jan. 18 to Feb. 4), in Glasgow, is turning 25 this year and will fill the Scottish city with not only Celtic music for two weeks, but folk, jazz and fusion tunes, too. David Milligan, one of the festival's performers in its inaugural year, is the musical director of the opening gala, an event that celebrates the history of the festival with a lineup of the genre's most respected artists, including Sharon Shannon.

There's celebrating a big anniversary, and then there's celebrating diversity: the [Afropunk Festival](#) (December), in Johannesburg, South Africa, celebrates the latter and is a two-day event to honor equality for people of all races, colors, creeds and genders. Afropunk stars like Laura Mvula and the Free Nationals performed last year, and the artists in 2018 promise to be just as notable.

Yes, there really is a music festival in the middle of a rain forest: the [Rainforest World Music Festival](#) (July 13 to 15), in Sarawak, Malaysia, in the heart of the Borneo jungle and in its 20th year, draws more than 20,000 attendees. They come to listen to the diverse range of musicians — traditional, indigenous and world fusion genres are part of the mix — who perform on two stages. The setting is one-of-a-kind, and the music is, too.

Music fans may want to visit Utah for the [Moab Music Festival](#) (Aug. 27 to Sept. 13) where jazz and classical music concerts are set among the region's renowned red rock formations. At the [Bach Festival](#) (June 8 to 17) in Leipzig, Germany, concerts are held in 40 venues across the city, including outdoors at Leipzig Market, the Leipzig Zoo and the city's main train station.

Jessica Colley Clarke contributed reporting.