



City to host outdoor music fest

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On the first day of summer this year, New Yorkers will have a chance to experience what Parisians have been enjoying for 25 years -- a citywide festival of free outdoor music, both amateur and professional, amplified and acoustic, mainstream and weird.

"We are on pace to have about 1,500 musical performers throughout the city," says Aaron Friedman, president of Make Music, New York, the festival organizer. "I lived in France for a year, and this is such an incredible, magical experience. I was shocked that no one was doing it here."

By streamlining the permit process, Make Music, New York has made it easy for musicians to get the needed permission to play outdoors.

The group has also arranged for large street closures, including Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg, which will host outdoor celebrations on June 21, the same day that hundreds of other cities around the world will be home to similar events.

But the real unique experience of the day comes from encountering hundreds of performances staged on street corners and in parks throughout the five boroughs.

"We pretty much have the ability to put any musician on any street corner and give them 15 minutes of fame," Friedman said.

The biggest challenge now for Make Music, New York is finding enough musicians to fill city streets all day and into the night. Volunteers have been canvassing music schools, churches and

jazz clubs looking to sign up acts.

Other musicians, from classical pianists to death metal bands, are encouraged to sign up through www.makemusicny.org.

Although no one will be paid for the shows, it's a rare chance for emerging musicians to play for the entire city.

They will also get the bragging rights that come from joining the thousands of other musicians that celebrate June 21 by playing free outdoor concerts in cities worldwide.

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