

# Singer Defends His Medvedev Meeting

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Andrei Makarevich

Andrei Makarevich, lead singer of rock band Mashina Vremeni, has complained about “numerous distortions and inaccuracies” in the coverage of his and other musicians’ meeting with President Dmitry Medvedev in a [letter](#) to the St. Petersburg Times.

Makarevich was responding to the paper’s Oct. 15 article about the meeting, which included Boris Grebenshchikov of Akvarium, at Moscow’s Rhythm and Blues Cafe.

The St. Petersburg Times is owned by Independent Media Sanoma Magazines, which also publishes The Moscow Times.

The article alleged that the musicians were “carefully picked” because of their loyalty to the nation’s leadership, citing Mashina Vremeni’s “pro-Kremlin concerts” as evidence of the band’s support. Mikhail Borzykin of Televizor was quoted as calling the artists “the Kremlin pool’s rock musicians” and mocking the “infantile timidity” of the questions they posed.

The meeting was set up by Vadim Samoilov of Agata Kristi, who in 2003 recorded an album with lyrics written by Vladislav Surkov, the presidential administration's first deputy chief of staff.

In 2005, Surkov held an infamous "secret meeting" with several rock musicians, including Grebenshchikov.

Makarevich staunchly denied that any political purpose motivated the recent gathering. In his letter, he said he had invited his "close friends" to the event, without considering their political beliefs, and maintained that the band had staged a concert to commemorate the end of elections, rather than in honor of the Kremlin.

He also defended his "politeness" during the gathering as a normal form of deference to a head of state and declared that his questions about the Bychkov prison and Khimki forest touched on serious issues.

"Any way you look at it," he concluded, "the idea of the country's president asking to visit the musicians whose music he grew up with doesn't horrify me. It's unfortunate that, because of the political situation, people try to pigeonhole us into two camps — one black, one white."

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