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Musicians Forced to Cancel Benefit Concert for Activist Troitsky

By Alexander Bratersky

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Management of the Central House of Artists has canceled a star-studded rock concert in support of music critic and public activist Artemy Troitsky, who blamed pressure from the authorities for the decision.

DDT frontman Yury Shevchuk was to join the bands Barto and Megapolis at the Central House of Artists on June 10, but center director Vasily Bychkov said the event had to be canceled after an influx of phone complaints.

Bychkov said "various" callers viewed the event "almost like a rally or an attempt to pressure the court" in three ongoing cases that Troitsky is involved in, the Rapsi judicial news agency reported. He did not specify who had called.

Troitsky said the calls came "from certain official organizations that I will not name now," Interfax reported. The callers "demanded the cancellation of the scheduled concert in my

support," he said.

No government officials have commented on the cancellation.

Troitsky, 55, is fighting separate court battles against goth rock star Vadim Samoilov and former policeman Nikolai Khovansky, both of whom have filed defamation lawsuits, punishable with up to one year in prison.

Troitsky named Khovansky as the "worst cop of the year" at a DDT concert in November. Khovansky was the first officer to arrive at the scene of a Moscow car crash involving LUKoil vice president Vladimir Barkov, and he blamed the accident on two women in the other car who died, sparking public outrage.

Khovansky won 130,000 rubles ($4,600) in damages in April but has demanded that a criminal case be opened against Troitsky.

In January, Troitsky called Samoilov "Surkov's poodle" on television, in a reference to Kremlin deputy chief of staff Vladimir Surkov. Samoilov has filed two lawsuits, including one seeking 1 million rubles ($35,000) in damages.

Vasily Shumov, who fronts the rock band Tsentr and had organized the benefit concert for Troitsky at the Central House of Artists, said he was looking for an alternative venue.

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