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In the Spotlight

By Anna Malpas

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This week, rock star Courtney Love sang at Kolomenskoye with her band Hole and treated the audience — and several hapless journalists — to some choice phrases.

At the concert for Afisha magazine's annual picnic, Love "regularly dished out ripe obscenities," the RBC business newspaper wrote in its review. She asked a member of the audience whether he wanted to have sex with her, it said, hinting that she used a more earthy term. "Seeing a positive reaction, the singer said: You have good taste," it added.

Spotting an audience member wearing a T-shirt with a picture of her late husband Kurt Cobain of Nirvana, who committed suicide in 1994, she told him to get out of her sight, KM.ru reported.

But Gazeta.ru reported approvingly that she sang her set of love songs "like a hungry cat" and said she gave a more striking performance than the picnic headliner, Russian rock star Zemfira.

In a paparazzi investigation, the Utro newspaper reported that Love avoided the usual Red

Square sightseeing and stayed in her hotel, allegedly ordering two bottles of whiskey.

Before the concert, Love did some uncomfortable phone interviews with Russian journalists, showing that she does not bear fools gladly.

Afisha magazine headlined its interview with Love to go with the event "Who, me? What the [expletive]?" That was her reaction in a prickly interview to a question about her "unflattering" comments regarding other celebrities on Twitter.

She was also fairly dismissive about Russia. Asked what she knew about the country, she replied: "Not much, except I knew a girl called Yeva from Ukraine. We did rehab together."

In another interview for artsy web site Openspace.ru, she launched into her mother, saying she forced her children to pay rent, despite a multimillion-dollar fortune, and married a series of "idiots." Asked what she was going to do after the interview, she confided that she was going for Botox injections.

At the beginning, she ticked the journalist off for asking boring questions and threatened that she would put down the receiver unless the next question was entertaining. Rather cleverly, the journalist went for the well-meaning idiot option, instead of fuming. "Has anyone ever terrified you like this?" the journalist asked, prompting Love to relent and become quite friendly.

As Love sang at the Afisha magazine picnic — an event that always has an alcohol prohibition — the news came out that another wild singer, Amy Winehouse, had died. Winehouse had visited Moscow several times for private concerts. She once sang for Roman Abramovich and his partner Darya Zhukova at the opening of the Garage contemporary art gallery in 2008.

Last year, Lifenews.ru got a shot of Winehouse arriving at the airport to play at the New Year's party of an unidentified "oligarch," alleging that she received a payment of $1.5 million. It also posted a clip of her singing in a leopard-print dress. It wrote that she behaved impeccably, with her only diva-like request being a particular brand of hair spray. But it said she had also ordered whiskey to her hotel room and did not appear to be sober at the concert, where audience members included billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov.

Izvestia published a mean opinion piece on Winehouse, saying she let her talent and other people down and that she "lived and died in the manner of the rougher parts of Golyanovo — in an ugly and mediocre way." Golyanovo is an outlying part of northeastern Moscow, near the ring road.

But Kommersant wrote that despite halting performances lately, Winehouse was still "the No. 1 pop heroine."

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