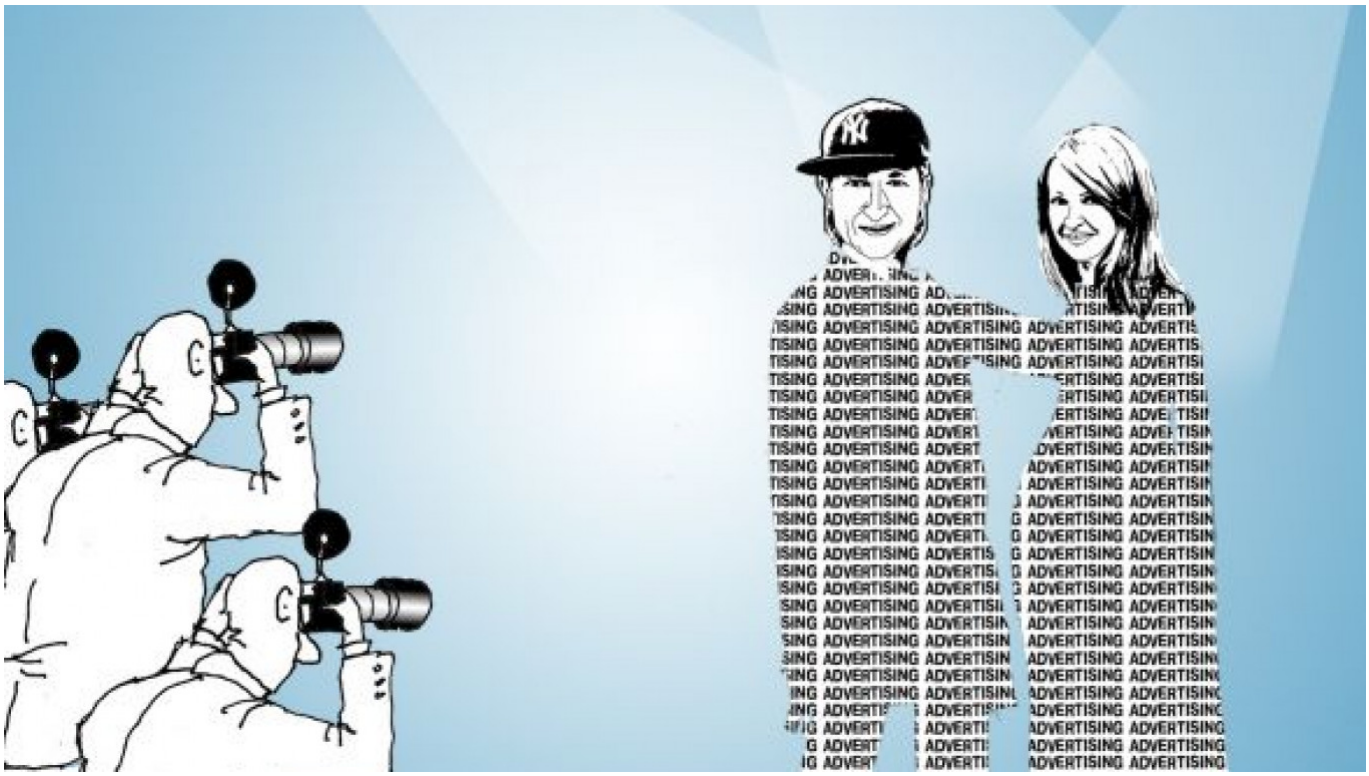
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Inthe Spotlight

By Anna Malpas

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This week, figure skater Yevgeny Plushenko and his wife, pop producer Yana Rudkovskaya, announced that they are expecting in Hello! magazine. This was also an opportunity for Rudkovskaya to plug a brand of moisturizer.

To be fair, their pregnancy news was broken for them a long time ago by television host and friend to the stars Andrei Malakhov, who somewhat unethically wrote on Twitter back in May that Rudkovskaya was nine weeks pregnant. Rudkovskaya told Hello! the baby is due in late December or early January.

I was hoping she might mention her ex-husband and the father of her two sons, Viktor Baturin. Remember him? The black sheep brother-in-law of ex-Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov who has been banged up in jail since November last year in pre-trial detention on suspicion of financial machinations connected to his sister's former company Inteko. But she did not — that would not be very Hello! magazine.

She did go into an obscure scandal involving one of her sons, who in fact is not her blood relation. In a bizarre Brazilian soap opera twist, Baturin's first wife gave up her rights to her

son in favor of her husband and he is being brought up by Rudkovskaya after she divorced Baturin in 2008. The boy's mother made a recent reappearance on tell-all chat show "Let Them Talk," hosted by Malakhov, claiming her right to the child.

Rudkovskaya hinted that she had delayed the show's coming out but said that she finally resigned herself to it as people were unlikely to feel much sympathy for a woman who gave up her mother's rights — albeit presumably under a lot of pressure and using ridiculously lax laws.

Rudkovskaya is also bringing up Baturin's one-time protege, pop star Dima Bilan, who somehow came under the custody arrangements. And she found time to mention to Hello! that he has a new album coming out.

You definitely detect an iron will in the pair, and it is not Plushenko's, despite his rigor as an Olympic gold medal winner.

At one point, he mentions that Rudkovskaya "does a lot of my business and helps find sponsors," and that one of these is a gambling company called Bingo-Boom.

Surprise, surprise, the magazine runs a full page ad in which Plushenko registers joy next to a woman holding a glass of champagne. It's a chain of bingo clubs that calls itself a lottery to comply with anti-gambling laws.

Rudkovskaya also drops into the interview that luckily a popular moisturizer brand is still perfectly safe during pregnancy and that she has just done an ad for the brand.

And we find the full-page ad that calls Rudkovskaya a qualified dermatologist (she has beauty salons in Sochi) and in which she endorses the anti-aging cream.

Finally there is a full-page ad for Rudkovskaya's talent show on Muz-TV called "Children's top ten with Yana Rudkvovskaya." Children get to make pop videos that are aired on the show — but only if they enter via something called the Stars Academy of Cinema and Show-Business, whose general producer is one Yana Rudkovskaya.

The academy doesn't give a price list, but its poorly moderated comments on VKontakte suggest that you do have to pay for your child to go there. Hello! magazine is listed as a partner on its website with examples of ads from the magazine.

And the academy's website says that one of its pupils' recent projects has been making an ad for their "friends," a certain Bingo-Boom company.

Russia's WTO entry probably came with fewer pre-conditions than the Hello! interview.

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