

A World-Famous Band With a 6-Song Oeuvre

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The band pictured during their breakthrough performance, of their song "Protests in Russia, Putin Chickened Out" on a wall on Red Square on Jan. 20.

Given how famous Pussy Riot has become, people are sometimes surprised to learn that the entire oeuvre of the women's punk band is made up of six songs and five videos.

Badly recorded, based on simple riffs and scream-like singing, the feminist singers were dismissed by many critics and listeners as amateur, provocative and obscene.

But the performance and release of each song's video mirrored important steps in the rise of the opposition movement that protested Vladimir Putin's return to power as president.

The band consists of at least 10 members who always performed in balaclavas so the identities of only the three who were convicted are publicly known.

Here is a guide to Pussy Riot's songs, including one released Friday just hours before

the Moscow court sentenced three members to two years in prison.

"Release the Cobblestones": The group's first song and video were released on Nov. 7, the anniversary of the 1917 Revolution.

The song recommends that Russians protest upcoming State Duma elections and throw cobblestones during street protests because "ballots will be used as toilet paper," the group said on its blog.

The song's most quoted line says that "Egyptian air is healthy for your lungs/Turn Red Square into Tahrir," the focal point of Egypt's uprising that toppled President Hosni Mubarak in 2011.

The song's video is compiled from footage of band members singing and twanging guitars from the top of subway and trolley cars.

The blog says the group was formed after its members "understood that after the Arab Spring Russia lacks political and sexual liberation, boldness, a feminist whip and a woman president."

"Kropotkin Vodka": Dedicated to Pyotr Kropotkin, a 19th-century prince and one of the founders of anarchism, the song advocates the "toppling of the Kremlin bastards" and "Death to prison, freedom to protests."

It was videotaped during the band's unannounced performances in posh restaurants and boutiques, during which band members use fire extinguishers to put out fires they have started.

The song's video was released on Dec. 1, three days before the Duma elections, which triggered the largest civil protests in Russia since the Soviet collapse.

"Death to Prison, Freedom to Protests": The song was recorded in mid-December, days after the first anti-Putin protests broke out.

The band performed the song on the roof of a pre-trial detention center where opposition leaders and activists were held.

"Protests in Russia, Putin Chickened Out": The band's breakthrough performance takes place in a part of Red Square where tsarist Russia once announced government decrees. During the performance, eight Pussy Riot band members were briefly detained.

"Mother of God, Cast Putin Out": Before the stunt at Christ the Savior Orthodox Cathedral that led to Friday's conviction, band members tried to play at Moscow's Epiphany Church but were taken away by security guards.

The 41-second performance at Christ the Savior, during which five band members high-kicked, danced and kneeled, whispering "Mother of God, Cast Putin Out," was interrupted by guards.

The Russian Orthodox Church's initial response was mild.

An outspoken cleric known for his liberal views called it a "legal outrage" during Shrovetide week, when church tradition allows and even encourages carnival-like escapades and jokes.

But the band then released the video with an actual song — with screeching guitars and an angry chorus urging the Mother of God to become a feminist. The song also claims that Patriarch Kirill venerates Putin instead of God.

"Putin Sets the Fires of Revolutions": Pussy Riot's latest song was played Friday afternoon by one of the band members who escaped arrest from the balcony of an apartment building that faces the Khamovnichesky District Court building where a judge was reading the verdict.

The balaclava-wearing young woman also threw out compact discs containing the song.

Hours later, the band's supporters danced to it near the court building before police pushed them away, detaining several people.

The song mocks Putin for his alleged cosmetic surgery and urges him to marry Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

The chorus says: Russia "takes to the streets to say goodbye to the regime."

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