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Art Pops: Stars Set Diplomatic Missions to Music

By Lena Smirnova

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Frodo came to Moscow while the Russians plotted to send their "Voice" to Sweden, in what was another week of diplomatic celebrity exchanges between the country and the West.

What does a hobbit do in Moscow? Perhaps don a furry hat, put on skates and eat some caviar. At least that is what Elijah Wood, American actor who is world-famous for his role as fantasy character in "The Lord of the Rings" series, decided to do during his first visit to Moscow. Wood was in town to promote the movie "Maniac" in which he plays a psychopathic serial killer. As he reported later at a press conference and on his Facebook feed, the actor skated on the ice rink at Red Square and ate caviar at the Kamchatka bar. Wood was also seen temporarily taking up DJ duties at one of the local clubs, Projector, though not everyone was left impressed with his efforts. The flamboyant stylist Vlad Lisovets tweeted the next day, "All people got excited, but I haven't watched a single series (not my genre) and didn't appreciate it."

The Academy Awards are still ahead of us, but for show-loving Russians what could be considered the key decision of 2013 has already been made. The candidate to represent the country at the Eurovision contest has been chosen, and unlike last year's contestants Buranovskiye Babushki, this year voters decided to go for someone young and modern. Dina Garipova, who won The Voice singing contest on Channel One in December, will represent Russia in Sweden in May with the song "What If." After the news broke out, Garipova said she wishes that the next contest, which is traditionally held in the homeland of the last winner, will be in Tatarstan where she is from. Only one Russian performer has ever managed to win top spot in the musical competition. The highly exuberant Dima Bilan took the trophy home in 2008 with the help of twirling figure skating champion Evgeny Plushenko and Ukrainian violinist Edvin Marton.

The popular Russian rocker Zemfira, who was once named one of Russia's most powerful women, has made a triumphant return to the music charts. Zemfira's first album after a six-year hiatus debuted at the top of the iTunes chart in Russia this week. The highly anticipated "Zhit v Tvoei Golove" (Live in your Head) was joined among the top 10 by another of Zemfira's albums, "Prosti Menya, Moya Lubov" (Forgive Me, My Love), which she released 13 years ago.

While some couples went back to the usual, gray February routine after St. Valentine's Day, Moscow's most talked about newlyweds, Ksenia Sobchak and Maxim Vitorgan, decided to prolong the romantic mood and jetted off to France for their honeymoon, as Sobchak told fans via Twitter. Prior to the trip, Sobchak faced an uncomfortable reunion with former-boyfriend Ilya Yashin. The former poster children for the opposition movement were forced to sit side by side at the opposition's coordination council and looked equally uncomfortable with these arrangements.

Ballerina Anastasia Volochkova got a strange request from her fans in the Far East. After a concert in Khabarovsk, fans sent her a card with the plea to give birth to a child from fellow showman Nikolai Baskov. The message on the card reads, "Beautiful! Dear! Much respected Anastasia! All of Russia asks you, make the country happy, and give birth to a child for Nikolai Baskov. Please. We plead, ask and wait. With love for you both. The Far East."

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