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Russian Cossacks Rally Against High-Heeled Ukrainian 'Kazaky'

By The Moscow Times

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Russian Cossacks rallied, yelled homophobic slurs and sang a traditional song in a Urals city over the weekend to protest a show by their high-heeled and androgynous namesakes in a Ukrainian band.

Kazaky, or "Cossacks," is a Ukrainian all-male synth-pop quartet whose members wear stiletto shoes and skin-tight clothes — sometimes reduced to nothing but leather pants or underwear. The band, which is best known for dancing in Madonna's 2012 music video "Girl Gone Wild," has recorded two albums and released several music videos with homoerotic choreography.

A group of Russian Cossacks staged a noisy protest near the Q2 nightclub in the city of Perm on Saturday, yelling threats and homophobic insults and urging the club's owners to cancel a Kazaky show, the band's manager Alexei Mironichev said.

But the show went on because "we are used to such pranks," Mironichev said in a telephone interview. "The threats were nothing special."

"We broke no rules that would have necessitated canceling the show," he said.

In a video posted on the website of Russian tabloid Lifenews.ru, two dozen men in Cossack uniforms yell, "Get out of Perm!" and sing Cossack songs near the Q2 nightclub. One of them said the show's organizers should have to pay a fine for breaching the recently adopted law banning the promotion of "nontraditional sexual relationships."

In 2011, Kazaky had to cancel a show in a village in the southern Rostov region because local Cossacks threatened to use violence against the band. Rostov is one of the strongholds of Cossack traditions in Russia.

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