

# Siberian Pop Singer Fawns Over Putin in Ode About Ukraine (Video)

By [Peter Spinella](#)

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As Western leaders ramp up pressure against Russia for its support of rebels in eastern Ukraine, a patriotic pop singer in Siberia has a message for her president: "My dear Putin, take me with you!"

"I want to be with you. I'm screaming after you," 29-year-old Maria Yakusheva, who goes by the stage name Mashany, proclaims in a new song called "My Putin."

Mashany, who is from Russia's third most populous city, Novosibirsk, released an album late last year featuring mostly English-language songs, such as the light-hearted "Like Your Bike" and "Dance Tonight." The patriotic "My Putin," sung in Russian, appeared on the album as a bonus track.

Putin enjoys astounding support from the Russian people despite the country's declining

economy and the violent conflict in neighboring Ukraine. Putin's popularity rating is currently at 85 percent, a survey published by independent pollster the Levada Center revealed Wednesday.

The music video for Mashany's "My Putin," uploaded to YouTube on Wednesday, juxtaposes shots of the singer wearing a Russian flag dress while frolicking in a sunny field, with darker scenes of her in a Ukrainian flag dress trapped behind a brick wall.

She went on to commend Putin for "challenging the world" and "returning Crimea" to Russia, according to an English-language translation of the lyrics on her website.

Russian media picking up the story on Thursday cited her as saying that Putin is "the only one who can help Ukraine."

Western leaders are currently considering imposing more sanctions against Russia after a flare-up in the Ukraine conflict in recent days saw the port city of Mariupol shelled from locations controlled by pro-Russian rebels, according to a statement by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Contact the author at [p.spinella@imedia.ru](mailto:p.spinella@imedia.ru)

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