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Stranglers Scrap Gig After Visa Problems

By Evelyn Cavalla

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The band was called the Guildford Stranglers in honor of its hometown.

Veteran British punk rock band The Stranglers won't get to sing their famous song about Leon Trotsky's ears burning in Moscow after they canceled a gig because of visa difficulties.

"Due to a severe tightening of restrictions for entry into Russia, plans for The Stranglers traveling to Moscow are now on hold until further notice and the show on the 11th of April has now been canceled," the band's management said in a statement on their Facebook page Monday.

"These events are beyond the band's control and the management sincerely apologizes for any inconvenience to the band's fans who were planning to travel."

Formed in the 1970s, one of The Stranglers' most famous songs, "No More Heroes," released in 1977, starts off with the words, "Whatever happened to Leon Trotsky?/He got an ice

pick/That made his ears burn" in a reference to the assassination of the exiled former revolutionary leader on the orders of Stalin in 1940.

The Stranglers' Moscow show was set to take place at YotaSpace on Leningradsky Prospekt and would have been their only performance outside Britain on their latest tour. Band member Baz Warne described himself as "gagging" to make the trip — his first to Moscow — in a post published on the band's "Ratter" blog in December.

The news was received bitterly on Facebook. Fan Charlie Braddock, whose cover photo shows him together with band members JJ Burnel, Jet Black and Dave Greenfield, vented his disappointment at the news on the band's Facebook page. "Thoroughly pissed off. Booked flights, hotels (all non refundable) and gig tickets."

Despite the band's statement, YotaSpace's ticket office was still selling tickets for 1,700 rubles on Wednesday. An employee at the ticket office said that the concert would still take place and that they had not yet received any instructions to the contrary.

A representative at Crocus City Hall, which regularly hosts foreign musicians, said they had not experienced any problems with bringing artists to Moscow.

Director Andrei Zvyagintsev's "Leviathan" won six awards at the Russian film critics' Bely Slon (White Elephant) ceremony Tuesday, according to a list of the winners published online by the Russian Union of Cinematographers.

In addition to winning prizes for best film, best director and best screenplay, "Leviathan" also picked up awards for best female lead, for the film's actress Yelena Lyadova, best male lead for actor Alexei Serebryakov, and best supporting actor for Roman Madyanov.

"Leviathan" has already received rave reviews abroad — winning a Golden Globe and picking up a nomination for an Academy Award — though the film has been criticized by some Russian officials for portraying their country in a negative light.

"Leviathan" is expected to show in at least 638 screens around the country when it opens Thursday, the report said.

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