

Russian Orthodox Activists Demand Finnish Performance Be Canceled as Threat to Morals

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The play has been staged in Sweden, Germany and the U.K. as well as in Finland, and received a prize from Finland's Arts Council in 2011.

Orthodox activists in Russia's northern Komi republic have demanded the cancelation of a Finnish theatrical performance on the grounds that it is ideologically subversive and could corrupt local youth, the KomiNews website reported Thursday.

Keeping the play from being staged in the regional capital Syktyvkar is a question of national security, according to a letter sent by the St. Stephen of Perm Republican Orthodox Pedagogical Society to the republic's Public Chamber.

The play by Finnish troupe Circus Uusi Maaailma is called "Globally Wanted" and is described on the theater's website as a "grotesque" acrobatic and dance performance that includes spanking, hanging and kissing.

The play has been staged in Sweden, Germany and the U.K. as well as in Finland, and received a prize from Finland's Arts Council in 2011. It is due to be performed on Nov.13-15 at Syktyvkar's Academic Drama Theater.

The republic's Public Chamber called an emergency meeting after the letter was received, but failed to decide whether the play should be canceled or not, KomiNews reported.

This spring, a version of Richard Wagner's opera "Tannhauser" was canceled in Novosibirsk and the theater's director lost his job after religious activists declared the play to be blasphemous.

In 2013, the Chekhov Moscow Art Theater was stormed by Orthodox activists who tried to stop a staging of a play by Oscar Wilde, while in 2012, a staging of Vladimir Nabokov's novel "Lolita" in St. Petersburg was canceled by the theater troupe after protests by religious activists.

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