

Rock Legend Vladimir Kuzmin Plays Crocus City Hall

Catch him while you can

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Vladimir Kuzmin **Evgeny Stukalin / TASS**

Short in stature with long curly hair, Vladimir Kuzmin might be mistaken for some aging fan of a 1980s rock band.

But Kuzmin is not a groupie — he's the star on stage, a guitar virtuoso with a trademark whisky voice, an enigmatic musician who can't be compartmentalized musically, politically or socially. At age 62, he is still the frontliner for the band "Dinamik," which has a cult following among Russians who grew up in the 1980s Soviet Union.

Golden Oldies

While Kuzmin produces some new material, it is the old hits and ballads such as "Simona,"

“I Will Never Forget You,” and “The Fairy Tale of My Life” that his audiences come to hear.

“Everyone who sings ‘Simona’ is getting a little younger,” Kuzmin jokes on stage as he sings the popular blues-style song about the girl named Simona who lives on the Riga shore and the guy who falls in love with her. They meet years later when Simona is a “grandmother walking her granddaughter to school.”

Kuzmin is best known for his ballads, which have rich and complex lyrics. “The most important for me is the synergy of text and music,” Kuzmin once told reporters. But he is also celebrated for his musical abilities: he performs on guitar, violin and drums. When he was president, Dmitry Medvedev, himself a rock fan, awarded Kuzmin the title of People’s Artist.

Happy, Stormy Past

A son of an officer in the Soviet marines, Kuzmin started to play guitar when his father was stationed outside Murmansk in the Russian far north.

He once recalled that time as the happiest in his life. Kuzmin was able to listen to American rock music on the short wave radio, since it was not jammed in that area. Like many Russian kids his age, he played Beatles songs, but unlike them he played them for his father’s friends and their wives.

After failing his exams at the Moscow Institute for Railway Workers, Kuzmin got a job at the Melodiya recording studio and then formed a “sanctioned” band. But he was never considered a sell-out.

“He could hold his own with many hard-core rock musicians, even when rock was underground. But he was not under state pressure, because he didn’t write social texts,” renowned rock DJ Lyudmila Streltsova told The Moscow Times.

This was a paradoxical situation, said Kommersant critic Boris Barabanov: “He has all the formal features of a rock musician and his main hits are rock songs, but they have never contained any protests lyrics.”

While Kuzmin usually stays out of politics, he has recently written a humorous song called “Binomo.” This song about the small sunny island was inspired by the telephone call to the American U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley by the two Russian prankers Vovan and Lexus, who said they were representatives of the Polish government complaining that Russia was trying to meddle in elections on Binomo Island.

Inspiration

Kuzmin has been officially married three times and is now living with his fourth wife. In the 1990s he was briefly married to the American model Kelly Curzon, who appeared in one of his music videos.

Kuzmin said that women have inspired his poetic and lyrical songwriting. Perhaps they all inspire him to keep performing. “I am not going to give any last tours. I play more concerts than all of the rest of Russia’s singers taken together.”

You can see this Russia legend perform on Thurs. Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. at Crocus City Hall in a concert dedicated to the 35th anniversary of the group “Dinamik.” Tickets are still available [here](#).

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