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Pussy Riot Pulls Out of German Festival Over Pro-Putin Singer's Appearance

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Pussy Riot / instagram

Russian anti-Kremlin activist group Pussy Riot has canceled its upcoming performance at a music festival in Germany due to the inclusion of a pro-Putin singer in the festival lineup.

Pussy Riot had been scheduled to perform at the International May Festival in Wiesbaden, one of Germany's oldest cultural festivals, but the group pulled out after the festival published its full lineup on Monday which featured Russian opera singer Anna Netrebko.

"No one had told us about Netrebko's participation in the festival. Equally, no one told us that they were just trying to plug a hole by replacing the Ukrainians who refused to perform," Pussy Riot said in a statement issued on Tuesday morning.

Musicians from the National Opera of Ukraine and actors from Kharkiv's Taras Shevchenko Drama Theater had originally accepted an invitation to perform at the festival, but they withdrew after the organizers declined to remove Netrebko from the program.

Related article: Russian Opera Cancels Performance of Diva Anna Netrebko

Subsequently, Pussy Riot accepted an invitation to come to Wiesbaden instead.

“We found out about the whole thing and the scandal from the news, naturally. Canceled the show. The end,” Pussy Riot member Olga Borisova told The Moscow Times.

Netrebko, a Russian-Austrian opera star, was at one point a vocal supporter of President Vladimir Putin, even serving as a proxy to support his re-election in 2012.

Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the singer made a controversial donation of $18,500 to an opera house in the separatist Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine and even posed with the flag of "Novorossiya," a planned puppet state the Kremlin was attempting to set up in separatist-held regions of Ukraine.

However, Netrebko did speak out against Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine and is in the unusual position of having her performances canceled in both the West and Russia.

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