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Russian Pop Stars Apologize On-Camera After 'Naked' Party Sparks Conservative Uproar

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Filipp Kirkorov and Nastya Ivleeva at the party. **Nastya Ivleeva / Instagram**

Russian celebrities and pop stars have started issuing on-camera apologies for attending a scandalous "almost naked" party that was widely condemned in pro-Kremlin circles as unpatriotic and disrespectful of Russian soldiers.

After initially dismissing the public outcry over footage of scantily clad celebrities and other guests at last week's private party at a Moscow nightclub, the party's organizer, media personality Anastasia Ivleeva, published a video in which she apologized for causing the controversy.

"Was it inappropriate to film footage that went viral? Yes, it was 100% highly inappropriate. I'm sorry that happened and that it couldn't be controlled," Ivleeva said on the Telegram messaging app Sunday.

“I apologize to everyone: to the public and to my guests who became unwitting participants in what unfolded in the media. I fully and completely recognize my responsibility for what happened.”

Ivleeva said she planned to donate part of the proceeds from the “almost naked” party to charity.

On Tuesday, pop star Filipp Kirkorov extended his own apology for attending Ivleeva’s party, saying: “There are moments in everyone’s life when you walk through the wrong door.”

“In these difficult times, heroic times, an artist of my caliber, a People’s Artist, cannot and should not be so irresponsible when participating in various events,” Kirkorov said.

“The last thing I’d want is for this oversight on my part to be the reason for restricting my art in Russia,” he added.

Embed:

> Киркоров, Лолита и Билан записали покаянные видео, в которых оправдываются за посещение вечеринки Ивлеевой.
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> Какой рафинированный совок! Скорей бы уже в каждом офисе и на каждом предприятии ввели правило отчитываться перед коллективом о том. как провел выходные, извиняться, если… pic.twitter.com/xSgmlyiTDA
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> — Сталингулаг (@StalinGulag) December 26, 2023

Kirkorov’s on-camera apology came one day after he was filmed explaining his actions to President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

Another veteran singer, Lolita, said in a video that she had not expected the anger the “almost naked” party would cause, adding that her concerts were now being canceled and appearances in pre-recorded New Year’s Eve TV shows edited out.

Singer Dima Bilan shared his public apology on Tuesday, claiming that his attendance at the party “is not a reflection of who I am.”

“I understand perfectly well the resentment of our people, and especially our guys who are defending us on the frontlines,” Bilan said, adding that he regularly donates to pro-war causes and performs for Russian soldiers’ families.

Also on Tuesday, media personality Ksenia Sobchak said she acknowledged that sharing images from Ivleeva’s “almost naked” party was inappropriate at a time when Russian troops were fighting in Ukraine.

“If anyone was offended by my appearance, I apologize for that,” Sobchak said. “I don’t want

to cause hatred and anger toward myself and other artists because of this stupid accident."

Nearly every artist hinted in their respective videos that they disapproved of rapper VACÍO (Nikolai Vasilyev), who was seen at the party wearing only a sock.

A Moscow court on Friday fined and jailed Vasilyev for 15 days on charges of "gay propaganda" and petty hooliganism.

Apology videos have become increasingly prevalent in Russia since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. They were first popularized by Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, whose critics have been forced to issue on-camera apologies since 2015.

Authorities have launched an inspection into tax evasion against Ivleeva, Yekaterina Mizulina, who heads a Kremlin-aligned online activist group, said Wednesday. If convicted, she faces up to five years in prison.

A class-action lawsuit seeks 1 billion rubles ($) from Ivleeva for causing "emotional damage."

A court that had convicted Vasilyev of petty hooliganism and gay propaganda ruled that Ivleeva's party had spread "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations."

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