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Spotify Removes Songs of Pro-War Russian Artists

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Singer Shaman (Yaroslav Dronov). **Pelagia Tikhonova / Moskva News Agency**

Music streaming service Spotify has removed the songs and profiles of pro-war Russian artists sanctioned by the West, the Sweden-based company told The Moscow Times on Thursday.

The removals affected the band Lyube and singers Grigory Leps, Oleg Gazmanov, Shaman and Polina Gagarina, among others, according to the Rodnoy Zvuk Telegram channel, which first reported the removals.

Lyube, Leps and Gazmanov have been under EU sanctions since 2022, when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of neighboring Ukraine. Shaman, whose real name is Yaroslav Dronov, and Polina Gagarina appeared in the latest EU sanctions package earlier this week.

In an email statement sent to The Moscow Times, Spotify said its "Platform Rules clearly

state that we take action when we identify content which explicitly violates our content policies or local laws."

"Upon review, these artists met the threshold for removal," the statement added, without detailing the nature of the violations.

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Earlier unconfirmed reports from Russian media outlets claimed the Spotify accounts of the affected artists may have been hacked, thus explaining the removal of their songs from the service.

Despite their removal from Spotify, the Russian artists' profiles remain accessible on other platforms, such as the U.S.-based Apple Music and YouTube.

In 2022, Spotify suspended streaming services and closed its office in Russia in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

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