

## In the Spotlight: Flamboyancy

By [Anna Malpas](#)

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This week, flamboyant pop star Filipp Kirkorov made a surprise announcement: He is now the father of a daughter through a surrogate mother in the United States.

Unlike a lot of show business stories, this really was a surprise. Kirkorov, 44, is a confirmed bachelor, who constantly says he has not got over his divorce from much-older pop diva Alla Pugachyova. And using a surrogate mother in the United States is hardly standard practice for Russian pop stars.

The story reminds me of Puerto Rican pop star Ricky Martin, who had twins with a surrogate mother, while still maintaining his heterosexuality, but later came out as gay. It's fair to say such questions swirl around Kirkorov too, but this is Russia, so there's little chance of any revelations.

No shrinking violet, Kirkorov made the announcement on television. Bizarrely, even state news agencies wrote about it, citing a host on "What, Where, When" quiz show, where Kirkorov was performing. He also made the announcement himself at a Golden Gramophone award ceremony, tears pouring down his cheek.

Then he appeared on the talk show “Let Them Talk” on Wednesday, sitting in an empty nursery with balloons and zillions of toys.

“Three people knew: Alla, Maxim and Kristina,” Kirkorov told host Andrei Malakhov, naming his ex-wife Alla Pugachyova, her alleged boyfriend Maxim Galkin and her daughter Kristina Orbakaite, showing that he has hardly broken the bond.

The baby is named after Kirkorov’s late mother. And Pugachyova. “Her name is Alla-Viktoria Filippovna Kirkorova,” Kirkorov said proudly.

“My life is divided into two parts: life with mum and life afterward with Alla Pugachyova,” he added, just in case anyone was having difficulty with the psychoanalysis.

Judging from Kirkorov’s behavior, Alla-Viktoria is going to be clucked over and turned into a tiny American/Russian/Bulgarian princess. Pugachyova and Kirkorov couldn’t have children during their time as Russia’s pop royal family, so this is the next best thing.

Kristina Orbakaite said on the show that Kirkorov had a lot of aunts and uncles and his father, all of whom “dreamed of the continuation of the line.”

Looking uncharacteristically unsure of himself, Kirkorov fiddled with his hands as he spoke to Malakhov, wearing a fatherly cardigan and black eyeliner. He said he was not able to touch the baby for two weeks due to U.S. rules, which seemed a bit odd.

He said the baby was born in the States “absolutely not so she’d have American citizenship.” He plans to fly her back within the month so she’ll be Russian.

“I won’t be lonely any more,” he said melodramatically.

Zhizn magazine reported that Kirkorov has lived alone for years, with his only company being a housekeeper and a Jack Russell called Pokemon.

“I’m 44. I’ve realized that I’m ready to become a father,” he told Malakhov. “Today I don’t have a woman I love by my side.”

He said he chose an American woman to avoid “unhealthy gossip” and because Russian law doesn’t allow surrogate motherhood. In Russia, single men have to prove their desire to have a surrogate child in court, Malakhov said.

He said somewhat misogynistically that lots of his fans would like to have his baby, but he was afraid the mother would try to take away the baby or stick him for lots of money.

Respect to him for doing the unconventional thing, which will be discussed to death. But the cynic would also point out that Kirkorov is now guaranteed many, many cute Hello! magazine features. And his latest video seems to cash in on the publicity by showing him bare-chested cradling a baby — but presumably not THE baby.

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