

In the Spotlight

By [Anna Malpas](#)

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It's a measure of the changes in Russia that pop diva Alla Pugachyova got married — for the fifth time — and no one was really that bothered.

Pugachyova got married to her long-term boy toy, television host Maxim Galkin, on Dec. 23, a day before the big election protest on Prospekt Sakharova. And the news was only broadcast on Christmas Eve, drowned out by coverage of the rally.

It was very different when Pugachyova married her previous husband, pop star Filipp Kirkorov in 1994. Then pictures of her and Kirkorov having a traditional church blessing (even if it was already her fourth marriage) were everywhere, and television shows slavishly followed their home life. She was a national treasure and Kirkorov was something of a sex symbol, making them pop royalty during their marriage, which finally ended with a divorce in 2005.

Her new husband Galkin, 35, has been on the scene for 10 years according to Pugachyova, although it has always been a very unlikely union. She is 27 years older than him. When they met he was a budding television comedian, admired for his brilliant impersonations. He has

since hosted "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" and "Starry Ice," a celebrity skating show. Rumors swirled that he was really gay and that their relationship was just to advance his career. But the wedding photos of the kiss — Pugachyova really grabbing hold of Galkin — seem to be pretty conclusive.

A reporter cheekily asked Pugachyova whether it was her last marriage. "Of course!" she said.

She even hinted at the possibility of a baby in an interview with the *Tainy Zvyozd* magazine, obviously with the help of modern science. "We are thinking about this. It's all God's will." She also said she is trying to quit smoking.

This time around, Pugachyova went for a simple registry office ceremony, followed by a party the next day for a few close friends, including ex-husband Kirkorov and her political protege Mikhail Prokhorov, who must have come straight from the rally.

Pugachyova spoke in support of Prokhorov at his abortive party conference as leader of A Right Cause. She said in an interview that she liked Prokhorov because he was a "real man," words that must have sent shivers down Vladimir Putin's spine. But she has not gotten involved in his presidential bid — at least not yet.

Kirkorov, one of the tallest men on the pop scene, posted on Twitter a photograph of himself standing next to spindly Prokhorov at the party. "He is 10 centimeters taller than me, this is ridiculous," the singer wrote in a caption, apparently not through a veil of tears at losing his former wife.

"The former husband turned up with a bouquet, that's a special relationship," *Rossia 1* television joked. It also showed a presumably illicit video of Pugachyova dancing with Kirkorov at the party.

The news of the secret wedding was broken by opera and pop star Nikolai Baskov on Twitter. "My friends, I am the first who will hand the country a sensation today. My close friend got married today! Hurrah! Tomorrow I will get plastered," he wrote, posting a picture of Galkin wearing a wedding ring.

Pugachyova wore a white fur wrap and black dress for the registry office, and then a short white dress at the party, when she threw her bouquet of lily of the valley. Galkin wore an evening dress and a dramatic full-length mink coat. He gave her a wedding present of a sapphire and diamond bracelet. She gave him a lamp for his home bar, but complained he didn't like it. The couple's wedding cake was decorated with lifelike miniature figures of them on top. If that's not enough, there are 25 pages in *OK! Magazine*.

The happy couple are going to live together in Galkin's newly built, turreted castle in a village called Gryaz, or dirt.

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