

Punk Band Takes Protest to Church

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Members of Pussy Riot holding a concert in Christ the Savior Cathedral. **Sergey Ponomarev**

Police detained a member of the all-female rock band Pussy Riot after the group gave an unsanctioned concert complete with swearwords Tuesday inside Christ the Savior Cathedral.

Four members of the band, known for its provocative lyrics targeting Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, were removed from the stage by security guards while performing the song “Holy Sh--,” Gazeta.ru reported.

The performance lasted less than five minutes, and afterward the rockers fled the scene, blogger Alexander Kashin told the news site.

“As soon as they started to perform, guards came from all sides, started grabbing them and tried to chase them out by yelling at them,” Kashin said.

Police said they will look into the incident, the Russia television station reported, citing police officials.

The musicians may be charged with hooliganism and could face up to seven years in prison if convicted.

Band members hide their faces with colorful balaclavas, but a police investigation might reveal their identity.

Pussy Riot gained notoriety by staging a similar impromptu concert on Red Square with a song ridiculing Putin.

Boris Yakemenko, leader of the conservative youth movement Orthodox Body, told Izvestia on Tuesday that the group is just trying to attract attention.

“Any filth is always more visible against a clean background,” he said. “If they had done this in a brothel, nobody would have noticed. It is for people like this that churches are needed.”

Senior Orthodox Christian Church official Vsevolod Chaplin said he learned of the incident from reporters, and described the band members as “poor things.”

But Father Andrei Kurayev, a well-known religious columnist, reacted less harshly, saying the performance was in line with the traditions of the Maslenitsa religious holiday.

“The thing done by them is an outrage, but it is a legal outrage.

It is a time of buffoonery. ... During Peter the Great’s time, those things were absolutely in line,” Kurayev said in a LiveJournal post Tuesday.

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