

## In the Spotlight

By [Anna Malpas](#)

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This week, flamboyant pop singer Filipp Kirkorov christened his baby Alla-Viktoria. It was just a small event with a national television channel filming, a few pop stars and a church closed for ordinary mortals on the Palm Sunday holiday.

There had been rumors that Alla-Viktoria might not exist. Kirkorov announced back in December that a surrogate mother in the United States had given birth to his baby. But then months went by without any sightings, and some even wondered whether she might be a PR stunt. What's more, some of Kirkorov's statements about the baby verged on the wild-eyed. Let's not even start on her emotionally loaded name combining the names of his ex-wife pop diva Alla Pugachyova and his late mother.

But no, blue-eyed and bouncing, she lay in Kirkorov's arms in a special edition of Channel One's "Let Them Talk" chat show on Monday, as he proudly showed her off to friends at the christening party. The guests included ex-wife Pugachyova and her new husband, television presenter Maxim Galkin. On television, the scene was set to a new song by Kirkorov in honor of his baby, called "Alla-Viktoria."

At one point as Kirkorov wafted around, a hand reached from offscreen and wiped some dribble from the baby's chin, suggesting that the father avoids the less aesthetically pleasing side of child care.

The show could seem like television intrusion into a family's personal life, but then again the host, Andrei Malakhov, is Alla-Viktoria's godfather.

Paparazzi waited outside the church as the guests arrived for the christening — pop stars, actors, fashion designers and I thought I spotted Turkish hotel owner Telman Ismailov. Kirkorov wore a naval-style jacket frogged with gold braid, while Alla-Viktoria was wrapped in voluminous layers of white satin and lace.

At the end, Kirkorov made a speech in front of the gilded altar, invited by the priest. Bizarrely, the punk feminist group Pussy Riot protested at this, complaining on their blog that Kirkorov was allowed to stand in the same closed-off part of the church where they tried to perform in the Church of Christ the Savior. The women, three of whom are facing jail for hooliganism after their abortive performance in January, said that by rights, Kirkorov should face the same punishment. Although he didn't sing, and even if he had, realistically it would not have been a diatribe against the church and Vladimir Putin. Pussy Riot also criticized Kirkorov for getting the church closed on a major religious holiday, Palm Sunday. The notice on the church's door, according to Life News, warned people off for "technical reasons for preparations for Easter," which did seem a bit of a stretch. Life News also reported that Kirkorov's people insisted on disinfecting the front.

"Let Them Talk" also gave some insights into Kirkorov's life as Malakhov went to his country house — with a lot of white and gold paneling and a worrying number of photographs of Pugachyova hanging in his bedroom. A sensible-looking middle-aged nanny hovered at all times and stopped the men from waking up Alla-Viktoria to film her.

There was something quite weird about seeing two tall men in suits cooing over a baby on television, with no mother in sight and no one turning a hair, despite everyone going into vapors about gay adoption here.

Alla-Viktoria — Alla for short — seemed to be a cooperative baby, posing in a Babygro with "Russia" written on her chest and letting Kirkorov play the "Alla-Viktoria" song to her on his MP3 player. Although, she did draw the line at intertwining her fingers photogenically with his.

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