

Gay Activists to Picket Yet Another Gergiev Concert

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Music conductor Valery Gergiev has become a lightning rod for gay rights protests during his world travels, and this Friday in London promises to be no exception.

Protesters having announced a picket outside London's Barbican Concert Hall, where Gergiev is set to direct the London Symphony Orchestra's performance of "The Damnation of Faust" by Berlioz. The LGBT activists oppose the conductor's support of President Vladimir Putin and refusal to denounce a Russian law signed this year that bans gay pride parades and other propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations.

The protests have not been too particular about the conductor's repertoire, with a New York based group having previously disrupted Gergiev's rendition of Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin" at the city's Metropolitan Opera with shouts of "Valery, your silence is killing Russian gays!"

Just before the LSO season's opening concert at the Barbican last week, gay activist Peter Tatchell, whose foundation is organizing Friday's picket, took to the stage and told the audience:

"Gergiev's loyalty to Putin has been rewarded with personal honors and massive state grants for his pet projects. Gergiev is a great conductor but he colludes with a tyrant and shows little concern for freedom and equality."

The Mariinsky Theater general director has repeatedly declined to comment on the attacks against him, breaking his silence only to say that he had nothing to apologize for.

"I came here to work as a conductor, not as a person who will talk from early morning until late evening about other things than music," he told RIA Novosti in early October during a visit to Washington.

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