

Hozier Hit Song Slams Russian Homophobia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Hozier is a 23-year-old Irish singer-songwriter from Bray, County Wicklow.

The breakout hit "Take Me to Church" by the young Irish singer Hozier — which has been adopted as a protest song against gay discrimination in Russia — was the most streamed single on Spotify this year, the online music service said Wednesday.

The anthem-like tune, which also has been nominated for song of the year at the 57th Grammy Awards, has had more than 87 million streams to date on Spotify.

It has also logged more than 40 million views for the video version on YouTube, Spotify said in a press release.

The video, in which Hozier, whose full name is Andrew Hozier-Byrne and who is a native of County Wicklow, does not appear, portrays a homophobic backlash against a young gay couple who have to flee an angry mob in Russia.

It includes a clip of a gay rally in Russia, where President Vladimir Putin has signed into law a ban on the spread of "gay propaganda" among minors that is widely regarded in the West as discriminatory.

"Take Me to Church" was first released by Hozier, 24, on an EP (extended play) single last year and rose to No. 2 in Ireland.

It later became the first track on his long-awaited debut album "Hozier," released by Island records in September and which debuted at No. 1 on the trade publication Billboard's rock album chart.

The song took off in the United States after Hozier sang it on "The David Letterman Show" in May and again in October on "Saturday Night Live."

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