

A different high soprano laughter

Runa Hestad Jenssen¹

Characters:

Maria Callas²

Rosi Braidotti³

Runa Hestad Jenssen

Location: An unnamed café in the Marais district of the 4th arrondissement of Paris, France

It's early on a Friday afternoon. A strikingly beautiful lady, slim in frame, sits alone at a small round table, smoking incessantly. She wears a jet-black dress, and sky-high heels. A large hat and oversized sunglasses hide much of what can only be assumed to be a stunning face. Between her dedicated cigarette smoking, she sips a glass of champagne. A tall blonde woman walks towards the table. She seems to be lost in her own thoughts, smiling to herself, breathing in the Parisian air, the skirt of her long floral dress floating in the light summer breeze. The two women greet each other with a warm hug, an embrace of friends who have not seen each other for years, kisses on each other's cheeks, and shrills of laughter – high 'soprano' laughter. Maria exclaims that she loves Runa's Nordic look with her long blonde braided hair, and how she can't believe that Runa is hurtling towards the end of a PhD with four small lively children, who Maria has not seen for two years because of these horrid Corona times. Runa admires Maria's new hat from Chanel, and silently thinks about how much it might have cost and if she might ever be able to afford one herself. Runa and Maria finally sit down at the table, and they wonder when Rosi, the rock'n roll star of philosophy, might arrive to join them. While waiting, they are occupied by discussing the state of their singing voices. Maria has been smoking too many cigarettes lately and is totally not in the shape she wants to be. Runa tries to work as a vocal performer at the same time as she is doing her PhD. It's hard. She is talking of nearly giving up her career as a singer, but Maria urges her to continue, saying that voice is a part of who Runa is, as unique as her fingerprint. Runa is not so sure about the idea of a 'voice as a fingerprint' anymore. Currently her mind is filled with a multiplicity of voices - her voice as a soprano, her voice as a researcher, and her voice as a teacher – voices that overlap, merge, and are tricky to sort out, leaving her to think: What does it mean to have a voice? Who is given a voice and who is not? She is hoping that Maria, with her long experience in the sociocultural context of singing and Rosi's philosophical thinking can help her to find some

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² Maria Callas (December 2, 1923 – September 16, 1977) was an American born Greek soprano who was one of the most renowned and influential opera singers of the 20th century. Her musical and dramatic talents led her being hailed as La Divina. For more information visit: [Maria Callas - Official Website \(maria-callas.com\)](http://maria-callas.com)

³ Rosi Braidotti (born 28. September 1954) is a contemporary continental philosopher and feminist theorist. Braidotti was born in Italy and grew up in Australia. She has her degree in philosophy from Sorbonne and was the founding Professor in Women's Studies. Braidotti is Distinguished University Professor and founding director of the Centre of the Humanities at Utrecht University. For more information visit: [Rosi Braidotti](http://rosi-braidotti.com)

clear answers. All Runa can see right now are too many possibilities, connections, and pathways. Maria's voice brings Runa out of her deep thoughts...

Maria: Should we order some wine while waiting for Rosi?

Runa: Yes, please! What would you like?

Maria: What about a Retsina?⁴

Runa: Oh! I love this strange wine you only make in Greece with pine sap. Does the wine make you think back to your times in Greece, Maria?

Maria: It's been years since I visited my country....

Maria looks out into the distance, with sadness in her eyes. She retreats into herself for a moment, sighs heavily, and recovers with a forced smile.

Maria: But, where on earth is Rosi? I hope she will be happy with the Retsina – she can be a diva sometimes when it comes to wine.

Runa: I'm sure she will be just fine with the wine – she is probably still talking about her book, *Nomadic Theory*,⁵ at her guest lecture at The Sorbonne. I wish I was there....

Maria: Really? You'd rather be at a lecture than drinking wine with me?!

Runa: Oh...no...but, it is just that I am trying to use Rosi's Nomadic thinking in my research – I think the nomadic can open...

A woman in her mid-60's, with grey unruly hair, enters the café with fluster and attention, making a beeline for Runa and Maria.

Rosi: Did I hear 'nomadic'? And is that a Retsina? You know I can't stand that wine!

Rosi laughs and winks at Maria with that comment. She seems a little stressed and short of breath. She pulls over another chair to the tiny table and takes off her well-worn black leather jacket – a terribly impractical item to wear on such a warm day. Sitting down, Rosi exhales a sigh and offers a cheeky smile to Runa and Maria.

Maria: Finally, you are here! Now, we can actually drink the wine. And how very nice it is to see you, Rosi! Salut!

⁴ Retsina is a Greek white or rosé wine, which has been made for at least 2700 years. It is perhaps the most widely drunk wine in Greece (although it is not popular in all areas of the country), and due to its strong taste, it is best suited with Mediterranean dishes with lots of herbs.

⁵ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

The three women raise their glasses.

Rosi: So, what have you two been talking about? Me, I guess? Or our last encounter in Oslo, now that was something... I will never forget that one. But I'm sorry I interrupted you both – please, keep going.

Maria: Runa was talking about her research. She has actually read your book on Nomadic Theory, and wants to engage with it...

At that comment Rosi cracks a generous smile, sits firmly upright, and slaps the palm of her hand on the table, making the glasses jump.

Rosi: Really, Runa? I am flattered.

Runa: Well, let's just say I spent a few hours with that book... is it weird to say a book can be your best friend? Because this one feels like it has really become mine - I am writing about how nomadic theory might give new entrances to think about voice, and how this re-thinking might give diversity in vocal pedagogy...

Maria: Diversity? Why on earth is diversity in voice pedagogy a good thing? I always found the skill of adapting to the norm in the conservatoire to be productive. The teachers often have long careers as performers to draw from, and training voice is individualistic, so...

Runa: Oh Maria, I really know where you are coming from – and I have experienced voice pedagogy as highly individualistic too, and also, well, disciplining, and normative.⁶ But, you know what? I am just so tired of reproducing sameness in the vocal field, which consists of such diversity. You know, when I sang in my vocal ensemble, I always enjoyed preparing the repertoire. Alone in the voice studio, I sang so well. But, after I rehearsed with the ensemble for days, my voice got tired. Alone, I could sing for hours, but in the ensemble, I often lost my voice. When the concert came, I sang really badly. That was so frustrating!

Rosi: Did you talk to someone about this?

Runa: I talked to my speech therapist about it...

Maria: Your speech therapist? Why the hell did you not confront the conductor?!

⁶ Runa H. Jenssen, *Facing the Soprano: Uncovering a Feminist Performative "I" Through Autoethnography*. In E. Angelo, Jn. Knigge, M. Sæther & W. Waagen (Eds.), *Higher Education as Context for Music Pedagogy Research* (pp. 113–135). (Cappelen Damm Akademisk, 2021)

Maria leans forward lifting herself out of the chair to show her investment in the conversation when interrupting Runa.

Runa: Well...

Runa hesitates, she does not want to appear to be un-reflected or weak, but that question makes her think. She pulls herself together and answers.

Runa: I guess I was afraid that I was developing knots on my vocal cords, so... I guess, the speech therapist was not surprised. She said, 'You are adapting a sound that is not yours'...

Rosi: But, is that not that the whole point of singing in an ensemble?

Maria: My voice would certainly not fit in an ensemble! I would have drowned everyone out with my big voice, and there is no way that I would adapt to a homogeneous sound.

Runa: You know, not all singers are in the privileged position you hold, Maria. So, I totally understand that singing in an ensemble adapting and struggling for a homogenic sound is 'part of the game', but now as a teacher and researcher I want to change this 'game'. I want to re-think what voice is.

Rosi: Hmmm, so, what do you really want to explore?

Runa: Well, I think I am exploring something about pushing boundaries and conventions, how boundaries and conventions of the context of singing might be transgressed through an embrace of difference.

Rosi: I like that, you can even make connection with the notion of voice into a nomadic subject, to show the transgression of voice, how...

Frustrated with the academic jargon, Maria thinks to herself while quietly rolling her eyes, "and these two want to embrace difference...", then interrupting with:

Maria: Oh, cut the crap, Rosi. Why do you always talk as if everyone is writing an academic article about the topic they are talking about? The beauty of your thinking, Runa, lies in the connection to your everyday life. And, I actually have a suggestion.

Runa nods with curiosity, while Rosi, still a bit surprised at being cut off in the middle of her reasoning by Maria, sits back into her chair.

Maria: Why don't you just tell a story? We singers are storytellers after all. You need to be grounded before you let your melody of line flow – grounded in your everyday life.

Runa: A story... I like that suggestion, Maria

Maria: Me too! The singing voice not only resonates on stage, but it keeps resonating – in the life of the listener, the worlds it inhabits. What do you think about that, Rosi?

Rosi: Good.... I can hear that you both are in the process of changing, engaging with processes. Not what voices are, but what they are becoming... Maybe you are grappling with the notion of difference?

Maria: Ha - difference is my middle name! What's on your mind, Runa? – I can see you are about to burst out with something.

Runa: Oh, yes, your comment on embracing difference made me think of a memory, an experience from a vocal ensemble I sang in... maybe there is a story to tell, Maria.

Maria: Finally! I am dying to hear a story. Spit it out!

Runa: Singing and being part of a vocal ensemble's culture, being exposed to a variety of repertoire, meeting other singers, soloists, orchestras, and conductors was like a school of its own, an experience I could never get at the Music Academy. Life in the ensemble became important to me – I was good at adapting to the norms and expectations. The demands that were not explicitly expressed by words, but by sounds – a homogeneous sound was ideal. As a diligent first soprano, I was 'exposed'...

Rosi: Exposed to what?

Runa: Well, literary, first sopranos are exposed in the sound picture with high tones, but also by standing at the far end of the line, since the first sopranos often are standing at the end of the first line in the choir, a position I always found a little scary. It always felt like I was waiting to be pushed out of line.

Rosi: Hold on, what line are you referring to?

Runa: The line - as in the hierarchy, there is always a newer and younger first soprano waiting to step into that line, and gosh, the newer and younger sopranos are seen to be appealing, so fresh faced and willing. I knew there was that line behind me, and it was a long line!

Maria: I totally get it. But, I thought you loved to sing in an ensemble, Runa?

Runa: Yes, I did, and I fitted well in the homogeneous sound in the choir - a light Nordic voice with little vibrato. Singing in this ensemble I travelled the world, singing early music

and contemporary music – repertoire I loved. That lonely feeling I had at the Music Academy, of working hour after hour alone in the voice studio – talk about an individualistic and self-centered practice! – was finally gone. I had colleagues in the ensemble, and some of them are still my closest friends. I became an experienced singer, rising in the hierarchy. I changed...

Rosi: How? What made you change? Tell me more...

Rosi is curious, and gestures Runa on while also topping up water glasses.

Runa: I changed from having an individualistic focus – to opening to and with others, and my voice changed. I sang with more confidence, yet at the same I felt more restricted because I had to adapt to the norm of the ensemble. After a few years my body also changed. I was expecting a baby. My second, only a few months since I last gave birth. I was, in retrospect, returning far too early to my place in the soprano row. I neglected my body.

Maria: A neglected body. Now, THAT is something I can relate to... But how did you neglect your body?

Runa: I did not listen to my body – there were now centimeters of distance between my core muscles, the pelvic muscles were not trained back to their usual shape. But not least, I was longing to hold my child in my arms - not a piece of sheet music. But I was afraid. Afraid of losing my place in the hierarchy. Afraid of not doing what was expected of me.

Suddenly it becomes quiet around the small table. It is like Runa's story is resonating with the sound from the others in the small café. With laughter, tears, the smell of wine and coffee. In the space of the silence, Runa continues...

It is the porous, fluid, and complex notion of having a voice – a changing voice, that I am so curious about. The entanglement of having a voice, what does it mean to have a voice? And, how can change and difference help to think differently about voice and vocal pedagogy? This is really an open-ended project, as like the act of singing – it keeps resonating. I want my research to resonate with others – with ‘the Other’ – the socio-cultural context of singing, even on a political level. I am sounding crazy now?

Maria: No, no, Runa, not at all. Listening to your story I can really feel the structural demands from a culture I have experienced myself. Oh gosh... Rosi, can you pass me the wine?

The wine bottle is empty. Maria waves at the waiter to order another bottle.

Rosi: Oh, Runa, thanks for sharing your memory – honestly, I am amazed that you could sing at all.

Runa: Me too... Oh, that makes me think of the time the ensemble performed Luciano Berios' 'Coro'⁷ - a masterpiece of music, written for voices and orchestra. Each singing voice was 'paired' with its own instrument in the orchestra. During the rehearsals, we sat mixed with the musicians. Not a common way to work.

Maria: Oh, I agree with that – talk about being exposed.

Runa: Actually, I loved this challenge. I even had a little solo, titled "It is so nice, a nice one gave a sound". One of my performances that I really remember. I embodied the music and lyrics with my life, as an exhausted mother of small children, who tried to convince herself, and especially those around her, that 'everything was fine', but inside her body it was chaos.

Maria: I never had children, but totally understand the feeling of an inner chaos and putting a mask on to pretend that everything is fine, well, that is the story of my life. But, how did that aria go?

Runa: Berio writes this solo as a duet with the first violin in the orchestra. I remember the intensity of the melody, the complex rhythm, which I rehearsed for hours, and the interaction until the sound of the violin was etched into my body. It was as if Berio captured the structural demands of the socio-cultural context of being a female singer, but also a mother. The contradictory and imposed feelings of ignoring the body, of wanting to scream out as ugly and intensely as only my voice could, but rather camouflage and overshadow this feeling by trying to make the voice sound natural, relaxed, and beautiful – making a nice sound, in the way I was trained to.

Rosi: Again, I really wonder why and how you could sing – being in that state?

Runa: But that was the problem. I failed. Hormones from pregnancy, no sleep, and a body not recovered from giving birth meant that I felt like I was screaming, near to the most primal voice of the body. I have never sung so 'ugly', yet so well, at a concert.

Maria: Ugly and well, that's fascinating. How did you do that?

Runa: I believe it is do with opening the body, letting feelings flow, but at the same time finding resistance in that flow – with the surroundings. Connecting to primal sounds,⁸ often with that 'ugly intensity' at the core. To connect to primal and 'ugly' sounds is a tricky but

⁷ Luciano Berio (1925 – 2003) was an Italian composer noted for his experimental work and pioneering work in electronic music. His work 'Coro' was written for forty voices and instruments between 1974 – 1976. See [Coro \(author's note\) | Centro Studi Luciano Berio - Luciano Berio's Official Website](#) for more information.

⁸ Brown (1996) refers to the reflexive sound as primal sound. It can be sounds such as crying, laughing, sighing, moaning, screaming and babbling.

beautiful combination. Honest and naked, and certainly different from how I was trained to sing, that is for sure.

Rosi: You know, having difference is very often connected to negative connotations, to being different from, meaning being less worthy than. That is certainly what my philosophy on Nomadic theory tries to rethink. What if difference is viewed as a positive space to hold...

The crowd in the café had swelled, people's voices were raised to be heard. Runa interrupts Rosi, loudly:

Runa: If we are to rethink difference as a term in trying to rethink voice, I believe vocal pedagogy is a space to begin. A useful, but also new way of looking at difference, offering a new way of relating to concepts, processes, and being in the world.

The three women pause for a moment of contemplation, before Maria and Rosi begin discussing rumors and scandals. About Onassis and Maria, and the latest news at the Utrecht Academy. Runa is in her own thoughts, scribbling notes furiously on a scrap of paper she found in her handbag.

Rosi: But, getting back to Runa's work... With your embodied experience you are starting from the most intimate location, which is also the most political, opening to broader issues – violence, freedom, dignity, democracy...

Maria: Oh, please! Can you both just explain things clearly! Maybe we should have some Rakia⁹ to help us out?

Maria goes to the ladies' room to reapply her makeup. Runa orders Rakia and checks her phone to see if everything is ok with the kids back at home, and Rosi takes a phone call where she explains she simply cannot be in Rome tomorrow to give a lecture... Maria returns, Rosi abruptly ends her call, and Runa puts her phone in her handbag. The Rakia is served, the three women raise their glasses and toast. Maria sings a few lines of an old Greek drinking song.

Runa: Well, Maria - don't you think how you and I think about voice and how we relate to the sociocultural context of singing, of voice pedagogy is political? I believe the culture we have embodied and been embedded in tells us how to relate to others in the wider drama of social life.¹⁰ That's what you mean by embodiment, right Rosi?

Rosi: Definitely! Embodiment is no longer one condition that rests on one specific concept, embodiment is a situation that we inhabit. We should think of our bodies as situations we

⁹ Rakia is a sweetened, often anise flavored, alcoholic drink that is popular in Greek Islands and Balkan countries.

¹⁰ Phil Weinrobe and Naem Inayatullah, *A Medium of Others: Rhythmic Soundscapes as Critical Utopias*. In: Franklin M.I. (eds) *Resounding International Relations*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

move in and out of. We should think of our bodies as a performing set of actions. We have many bodies – negotiating with other bodies.¹¹

Maria: You have written books on nomadism Rosi, so you perhaps have the upper hand in this conversation. But what does nomadic thinking really mean in your study on voices, Runa?

Runa: Hmm... Well, what I really enjoy with nomadic thought is that it decenters the focus on the individual, moving away from the static identity, and turns towards a thinking that emerges from embodied relations. In doing so, nomadic thought empowers the Other. Nomadism empowers voices, or others who are holding marginalized, sexualized, or racialized positions. Becoming voice has to do with “emptying out the self, opening it out to possible encounters with the ‘outside’” – as Rosi puts it.

Maria: The fact is... there are many shades of voice.

Runa: Yes, exactly! Voice is not a passive or static identity. Voice is fluid. The institutionalized voice identity of a choir, of voice pedagogy, in music education is missing something... the borders are too strict, too normative. If voice is to be self-organized and relational, and make a connection with Others, we must certainly strive to rethink voice in music education, but also in society generally.

Rosi: You are starting to think rather nomadically, Runa! Thinking through and moving across established categories and levels within categories, enabling the subject to resist settling into already socially coded modes and acts of behavior...

Maria: This is not my language – can you please translate to how this relates to the singing voice?

Runa: As a soprano I had to conform to the homogeneous ideal sound in the choir, but at the same time I was rebelling and moving towards the heterogeneous ideal sound. That became a dilemma and contradiction. By rethinking voice through difference, I can show that difference, movement away from the norm, is a resource, yes?

Maria: Yes! Okay, I am starting to get it. We will need coffee to continue this. Thank God for coffee. Let’s have three double espressos...

Runa: ... and chocolate cake! So, coffee and cake for all of us – my treat.

¹¹ This response is inspired by the lecture [Cyber Space and Sexual In-Difference | Rosi Braidotti](#) and draws in direct quotes, particular words / phrases into the text.

Runa dashes to a little pastry shop across the road to get cake. Maria asks the waiter for three double espressos, before continuing to chat with Rosi. Maria looks around to check Runa is out of earshot, and she whispers:

Maria: Why in God's name are you always triggering Runa to go into the world of unknown theory and methodology? Isn't that a risky place to go into as a PhD student? Why can't you just lead her into something a bit safer so she can get her work done without too much resistance.

Rosi: Oh, Maria, how can you say that?! Especially as an artist who always went into the unknown.

Rosi suddenly stops her usual long argument – she pauses. Maria's words make her think. Rosi is a Professor, and her academic career is somewhat safe now. Off course she wants Runa to be brave, but also to have a job, to write applications, and be rewarded.

Rosi: You heard, Runa. She is looking for alternative ways of knowing.

Maria: It is a cruel world Rosi, and you know it! She does not have to gamble as I did. That got me in a lot of trouble. I was completely crushed. I could not live up to the Maria people were expecting to hear.

Rosi: Were those your own expectations, or someone else?

Maria: You are starting to sound like my psychologist...

Rosi: Ha! That's what happens when you come from the French post-structuralist thinkers from the 80's ...

Runa returns to the table with three pieces of chocolate cake, smiling at Maria and Rosi, while shaking her head, saying:

Runa: What are you two quarrelling about? You are just like my kids – can't leave them for two minutes ...

Maria: Oh, nothing ... Shall we just say that Rosi might have some good advice for your PhD study, Runa...

Rosi: Fine. I'll give it to you. Read, read, and read some more. But, do not only read the work of dead white men – we don't need more of that. My main message: don't be faithful, don't be a doormat, betray, I was trained to being undutiful!

Runa: Oh! That is easy for you to say I was trained to duty, loyalty, faithfulness – an obedient soprano. You should join me at a class at the Music Academy. You know, I have

always been a thinker. Being a student at the Music Academy, I was often told to stop thinking and asking so many questions; “Can’t you ‘just’ sing”, I often heard. Maybe it was this ‘thinking’, that made me feel singing with a voice, but without a body. I also loved to talk during my concerts. I wanted to erase the distinction between hall and stage, between language barriers, between the notes and the text. But again, I was told to “shut your mouth, and just sing”. I was also told that since I was studying in a big city and coming from the countryside where my dialect was a bit unusual, that listeners would not understand me anyway. And, not to speak of the position of the larynx! With all that talk, I had degraded the space of resonance before I had sung a note. “Just sing”. This dualistic thinking of my voice, where I should ‘just sing’, without all the thinking, only made me feel disconnected to my body, which is the instrument of the singer.

Maria: Oh, I can so relate to your experience. I was certainly trained to obey, to not ask questions.

Runa: The master-apprentice pedagogy that is still holding the fort is so dangerous, because it keeps repeating the same patterns that history has taught us. The idea that voice is fixed, that we have ‘a’ voice, as a fingerprint – using your words, Maria – is becoming problematic for me. Voice is not singular or innate. Voice is cultural, a shared practice.

Maria: If there are costs to such reducing of the voice, are there not also benefits? Likewise, if establishing difference in voice has benefits, will it not also have costs?

Runa: Yes – both ways are risky! But I believe by being in a position of risk is where change can happen – as a researcher, singer, and teacher.

Rosi: I believe you both need to detox yourself from bad habits, of thinking in relation to each other. Free yourself from the communities by imagining new communities¹².

Runa: You know, I see singing as a cultural practice¹³ enabling the creation of identities. But is the sociocultural context of singing enabling a myriad and variety of voices? Maybe the voice is not a fingerprint at all? And is vocal pedagogy really open for a diversity of voices? What about music education? Maybe voice is not innate – it is cultural, it is collective – it is an engagement with the Other. I am so sorry! I am being a real diva here, going on and on about my own work ...Becoming a researcher, I am more self-centered than I was as a soprano!

Maria: That’s what friendship is all about – listening. And, I don’t think you ‘only’ talked about yourself – your experiences certainly resonate with mine. I think I will go home and

¹²This response is inspired by the “Revolution is a fascist concept” on YouTube, 2 April 2019 and draws in direct quotes, particular words / phrases into the text.

¹³ Graham Welch et. al, *The Oxford handbook of singing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

write my memoirs about being an opera diva with another punch now – with a critical view not only to myself, but also of the culture I experienced.

Rosi: I agree with Maria– listening is vital, also in research. With your work, Runa, you are listening to changing voices, and listening to voices seldom heard. While listening to these voices you are trying to rethink, to change the notion of voice. Let’s do that more often. But first – let’s have a good gin and tonic – and then we can all go to the punk concert with the famous Nina Hagen, the mother of punk.

Maria: Oh Rosi, but it is so noisy, why can’t we go and listen to Bach?

Rosi: You can have your Bach Maria, but you should really explore punk sometime - they are expressing the same message I believe. The next time you are buying a new hat, Maria, buy a balaclava as well, and be inspired of Pussy Riot.¹⁴

Maria: Ha! Rosi, you can hide behind the language of philosophy and theory all you want, but I think we should head to the opera house and see how they use imagination as a connection to real life there – now *that* is some connection.

Runa: Oh, can you two please stop fighting? Let’s enjoy the Parisian air, art, and life. Isn’t that what we all are here for?

While leaving the café, Runa is borrowing Maria’s Chanel hat, while Rosi forgets her leather jacket at the table. Maria has given up on her sky-high stilettos, carrying them in her hand. Her oversized sunglasses are gone, and she looks as beautiful as ever. Runa seems to be lost in her own thoughts again, while walking between her two friends. Her braided hair has fallen out and billows behind her in the warm breeze. Did she get any clear answers? Maybe? Maybe not? Possibilities and stories from an inner world are powerful. She is thinking to herself how next time she performs she will definitely not shut up and just sing, but create a long monologue, showing her entanglement and bodily engagement in voices – a multiplicity of voices. The three friends wander through the cobbled Parisian streets with conversation and laughter, and in between you can hear Runa’s high laughter - a different high soprano laughter.

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¹⁴ Pussy Riot is a Russian, feminist punk rock collective formed in August 2011. The group has its origins in the artist association Vojna, and is inspired by, among others, the Riot Grrrl movement. Around 25-30 women have participated in Pussy Riot's performances - all under a pseudonym and with knitted balaclavas.

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