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CANCELED

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

came right after Israel's deadly May 31 interception of the Gaza-bound, Turkish-flagged aid flotilla, which left nine passengers dead. A day later, Ryan's staff e-mailed the Jerusalem Film Festival to say she would not be able to attend. Reports that actor Dustin Hoffman also canceled an appearance at the festival were unfounded; Hoffman had never been scheduled to attend the event.

When Costello canceled his two concerts in Tel Aviv at the end of June, he said the decision was "a matter of instinct and conscience."

In a message posted on his website, Costello wrote, "There are occasions when merely having your name added to a concert schedule may be interpreted as a political act that resonates more than anything that might be sung and it may be assumed that one has no mind for the suffering of the innocent."

The cancellations have frustrated Israel's music lovers, producers and friends.

Israeli filmmaker Joseph Cedar, whose 2007 movie *Beaufort* received an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film, told JTA that the refusal of artists to perform in Israel is a kind of collective punishment of the culture-loving public—often the very public that is "extra critical of Israeli policies."

Cedar said that while he believes a boycott is "a legitimate way for an artist to express his political views," they should be political views the artist has consistently and publicly held.

Some artists appear to be concerned that their performances in Israel will be perceived as a political endorsement of Israel's policies.

When Banhart canceled a pair of Tel Aviv performances two days before their mid-June dates, a message posted on the artist's website read: "We were coming to share a human and not a political message but it seems that we are being used to support views that are not our own. We will be overjoyed to return to Israel on the day that our presence is perceived and reported on as a cultural event and not a political one."

Asked what the Israeli Sport and Culture Ministry is doing to stem the tide of cancellations, a ministry spokesman said "nothing."

The cultural boycott of Israel has spread beyond the borders of the Jewish state. Last month in Spain, a float sponsored by the Tel Aviv municipality was banned from Madrid's gay pride parade. One reason for the withdrawal cited by organizers: Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai had not condemned the Gaza flotilla incident.

The same week, a popular Bob Dylan fan site began blocking users inside Israel in what the Danish site operator called a "cultural boycott" in response to the flotilla incident.

Israel has faced similar situations. During the second intifada in the early 2000s, numerous artists canceled appearances in the country due to security concerns.

Still, many acts are going through with their scheduled performances. Some, like the British rock group Jethro Tull, are taking pains to draw distinctions between culture and politics. After coming under pressure from pro-Palestinian groups such as the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, Jethro



Elton John

Some of the celebrities who have not bowed to pressure to cancel appearances in Israel.



Missy Elliott



Rihanna



Johnny "Rotten" Lydon



Jethro Tull

Tull reaffirmed that it would be playing three concerts in Israel in early August.

Front man Ian Anderson said in a statement linked to the concert dates that he has "long maintained the position that culture and the arts should be free of political and religious censorship and a distance kept between them." Anderson also said he would donate his concert proceeds to charities promoting coexistence.

Another performer, Johnny "Rotten" Lydon, the former Sex Pistols front man, announced on the BBC in London that he would not cancel his Aug. 31 show in Tel Aviv despite receiving hate mail.

In his announcement Lydon said he would not let "the political powers-that-be" dictate his audience. However, Lydon said that didn't mean he was necessarily supporting Israel. "I'm anti-government ... and I shall be making that loud and clearly proud once I'm in Israel," Lydon told the BBC.

Others have been more unabashedly warm toward Israel. In mid-June, Elton John, who has donated money to Israeli causes, played before an enthusiastic crowd.

"Shalom, we are so happy to be back here! Ain't nothing gonna stop us from coming, baby," the singer told the crowd. "Musicians spread love and peace, and bring people together. That's what we do. We don't cherry-pick our conscience."

Musicians Rod Stewart and Rihanna also performed in Israel this summer. And Ynet reported that American singer Missy Elliott announced that after pressure to cancel her July 15 show in Tel Aviv, she would arrive in Israel a day early to tour the country with her entourage of dancers and crew.

'Dancing Auschwitz' video gets mixed response

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — A YouTube video of a family singing and dancing at Auschwitz has received more than half a million hits and mixed reaction.


Australian artist Jane Korman filmed her 89-year-old father Adolek Kohn, a former inmate at Auschwitz, and her three children dancing outside the infamous death camp, as well as at Dachau and Terezin to the tune of Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive."

The video has skyrocketed to more than 500,000 hits on YouTube and has generated more than 3,000 responses. Many of the comments were sympathetic, but some were scathing. The video also has been exploited by neo-Nazi websites.

Korman, of Melbourne, posted a message defending her work. "My intention was to present a fresh perspective to younger generations who have often become desensitized to the horrors of the Holocaust," she said.

In an interview, Korman's father said first the family prayed for the martyrs. "The dancing was also very important because we are alive, we survived," Kohn said.

Not everyone agreed. Kamil Cwiok, 86, told *The Daily Mail*, "It seems to trivialize the horrors that were committed there."



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