

## Music during the war: Ukraine

Dear colleagues, in my speech I would like to reproduce the general situation in which music found itself after the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine. Of course, musical life, like the whole life of my country, has changed dramatically. But music (primarily academic music) during the war not only continues to function actively, but also expands all its possibilities and influences as much as possible. Music has become an important part of spiritual resistance to aggression and evil, a symbol of hope and faith in the victory of good, emotional, moral and psychological support, a means of uniting people.

New, extremely bright works appeared, as a reaction, response of composers to tragic events. I will name only a few of them - the symphonic and choral opus "Bucha. Lacrimosa" by Victoria Poleva, "Prayer for Ukraine" and the choral cycle "Tears" by Valentin Sylvestrov, "Lacrimosa" by Oleksandr Shchetynskyi, "City of Mary" (dedicated to Mariupol) by Zoltan Almasha, "Shine by the black sun" (Donbass, 2022) by Yevgena Petrichenko, "War Psalms" and the opera "Terrible Revenge" (based on Gogol) by Yevhen Stankovych, chamber compositions "Drop after drop" (to the heroes of Ukraine) by Maksym Shalygin, "Reading History" by Carmella Tsepkenko and many others. These and other works are heard not only in Ukraine.

We are observing a peculiar phenomenon - through music, through our musicians, Ukraine is becoming known in the world. Music groups, conductors, soloists from Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, the Baltic countries, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Sweden, Italy, the USA, and other countries show great interest in Ukrainian music, which was previously almost unknown abroad.

[https://youtu.be/\\_pWKVJFF-Pc](https://youtu.be/_pWKVJFF-Pc)

In Ukraine, a platform has been created where 2,000 scores of works by Ukrainian composers are digitized and ready for use. The demand for them is growing: in just two months of the war, more than 600 applications were received from different countries of the world.

Colleagues, I will remind you of a well-known fact from ancient history. As early as the 11th century, in Kyivan Rus, as in many European countries, there were so-called music workshops, which united all those involved in the musical profession, who supported and helped each other. This is the kind of union solidarity that musicians are now showing on an international scale. After all, the musicians of Ukraine feel great support and help, just as our country feels the support and help of the whole world during an aggressive, brutal war. And I take this opportunity to express my gratitude on behalf of the musical community of Ukraine to all colleagues, partners, all international organizations, foundations for their solidarity, support and help.

It is clear that the war brought completely new challenges and great difficulties to the existence of music, to Ukrainian musicians. A colossal number of performers, teachers, composers, musicologists, and managers found themselves in a difficult, difficult situation: hundreds were forced to live abroad, thousands became internally displaced. After February 24 of last year, many musicians took up weapons instead of instruments to defend Ukraine. They are helped by special funds created in Ukraine. For example, Musicians Defend Ukraine provides musicians, artists with bulletproof

vests, necessary military items, and medical supplies. The Ukrainian Emergency Aid Art Fund was also founded.

One of the first international organizations that support our musicians outside of Ukraine and in Ukraine itself was the Swiss Association "Art Without Borders". As early as March 1, 2022, the Association called on people from all over the world to help Ukrainians financially: "Usually we help young musicians on their career path, now we help them survive — medicine, food, emergency medical care" (p.). On the initiative of the International Organization for Migration, the UN Migration Agency, the Representative Office in Ukraine, with the support of the Yoshiki Foundation America, a grant program was created to support Ukrainians during the war with the help of music. This program includes stabilizing the mental health of the affected population, strengthening the social integration of war-affected children and their families. Thanks to mobility grants under the EU4Culture program funded by the EU and other international grants, Ivan Taranenko, Volodymyr Runchak in Poland, Valentin Sylvestrov in Germany, Viktoriya Poleva in Switzerland, Lyudmila Yuryna in the USA continue their composing activities, Ukrainian professors are accepted by higher educational institutions in Europe. Another example of international support for Ukrainian musicians is the well-known company "C. Bechstein" donated its building in Berlin to Ukrainian refugees and organizes charity concerts with the participation of immigrant musicians.

The international academic mobility program Erasmus+ provides significant help to young musicians, thanks to which 87 students of higher educational musical institutions of Ukraine are currently studying in Italy, Germany, Spain, Estonia. There is also another category of Ukrainian students who, during the war, received a musical education in parallel - in Ukraine and in the institution of the country where they are now. The Vere Music Fund and other international grantmakers continue to provide grants to creative youth. And there are many such examples.

Of course, the functioning of music is supported by the state structures of Ukraine. This includes partial financing of musical projects and, importantly, permission for male musicians to temporarily leave Ukraine during tours. This makes it possible to combine artists into international musical groups. For example, "Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra" united musicians from Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa and artists from various orchestras around the world. With the support of the Metropolitan Opera and the Polish National Opera under the baton of conductor Kerri-Lynn Wilson, the "Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra" made a major tour of European countries, which ended in Washington. The National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, the National Choral Chapel "Dumka", orchestras and soloists of the Ukrainian Philharmonics, the "Ukrainian Youth Orchestra" under the direction of Oksana Lyniv continue their touring activities.

A great role in the spread of Ukrainian music is played by music festivals and competitions in Ukraine itself, which during the war expanded their geography and also became "immigrants". As an example, these are the successful "Bouquet Kyiv Stage" festivals in Oxford, London and Tbilisi (the next one will be in Stockholm), the Odessa festival "2 days and 2 nights of new music" in Eckernförde (Germany), the competition of young pianists in memory of Volodymyr Horovyts in Geneva, the 2nd online competition "Odesa Music Olymp" has just ended, the partner of which, by the

way, is the National Committee of Ukraine IMS, and in which even children from Bakhmut took part.

The forced internal emigration of musicians who were forced to leave war zones is also a big problem. Music educational institutions in Kyiv, Lviv, and other relatively safe cities accept professors and students from all front-line regions. In the same way as abroad, musicians unite in mixed collectives, where local musicians play with immigrants from Kharkiv, Luhansk, Mariupol, Kherson, Donetsk, and colleagues from Severodonetsk, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, etc. act as soloists and conductors.

Their performances are held under the slogans "For the sake of life", "Music against war", "Music of the indomitable", "Ukrainian artists with their weapons". Most of the concerts are held to raise funds to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine, military hospitals and help refugees. Hundreds of concerts were held in frontline areas and even on the front line. The reaction, emotions and words of gratitude of the military to these concerts are incredible!



Unexpected and seemingly unsuitable locations for music became a completely new phenomenon. Nowadays, music is very often heard in the open air, at railway stations and airports. The performances of musicians underground - in bomb shelters, basements, subways - became a special phenomenon.





After all, it often happens that air alarms a few minutes before the concert, or sirens during the concert force the audience to take cover. A special telethon "Concert for the whole world from the bomb shelter" was even created. The project of Kharkiv musicians was also impressive: on the streets of Kharkiv, near completely destroyed buildings, Bach's music sounds live. (<https://youtu.be/lQHZO11LcKU>)

Of course, these are only some features of the picture of musical life in modern Ukraine. But concluding my speech, I want to convey the belief of all of us that after the Victory of Ukraine, music, like all life, will gradually return to its usual, not extreme, forms of existence. And for this, a lot of support and help from colleagues and partners of the entire international music community will be needed, and among them - further cooperation with such a respectable institution as EMC/IMS.

Thank you for attention,  
Secretary General of the National Committee of Ukraine IMS Lessia Oliinyk