



Ukrainian Congress Committee of America Illinois Division

Український Конгресовий Комітет Америки - Відділ Ілліной

2247 West Chicago Avenue

Chicago, Illinois 60622

uccaillinois.org

1 September 2022

Dear Kristopher McDowell:

On behalf of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America-Illinois Division, we would like to thank you for your excellent work in promoting the culture of Ukraine over the years.

This horrific war brought devastation and suffering to Ukraine unseen since WWII; but, it also has created unprecedented opportunities for Ukrainian voices to be heard around the globe. In this context, we would like to express our concerns over the fact that, Kyiv City Ballet has announced "Swan Lake" by the Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky to be the major part of your performances during your US tour in 2022.

It is true, Tchaikovsky has certain Ukrainian connections that are largely unknown outside of Ukraine. It is also clear that, Pyotr Tchaikovsky is known worldwide as the key Russian composer and has very little to no relations to the Ukrainian classical music scene.

In the situation of unprecedented interest in the art and culture of Ukraine such as we are witnessing today, we find it shocking that you have programmed celebrating a Russian composer. It would seem much more appropriate to use this current opportunity to give exposure to either Ukrainian composers or anyone with no Russian connections.

Today, the Ukrainian cultural community is calling on the world to pause any engagement with Russian culture until the end of the war. Historically Russian art/culture has enjoyed much greater international visibility than Ukrainian, quite often to the detriment of the latter. Suffice it to say that, today's status of composers such as Tchaikovsky, is incomparable to that of their Ukrainian counterparts, such as Lyatoshynsky, thanks in no small part to the imperialist policy of the Soviet Union that offered privilege for composers working in Moscow over their colleagues from the 'provinces.' This state of affairs has been reinforced since 1991 by Russia's huge financial investments into the cultural diplomacy that Ukraine could not match. And right now, as Russian troops are physically destroying Ukrainian culture, bringing back the worst memories of the Soviet purges of Ukrainian intelligentsia from the 1930s to the 1980s, it is vital to enhance Ukrainian voices and show the audiences around the world what we are all risking to lose.

We are thus urging you to change the program by removing Tchaikovsky and instead performing one of the other legendary ballets, such as Carmen, Giselle or Romeo and Juliet.

Best regards,

Dan Diaczun

Dan Diaczun
President

Marta Farion
Vice-President

Paulo T. Bandriwsky

Pavlo T. Bandriwsky
Vice-President

Maria Korkatsch Groszko

Maria Korkatsch-Groszko
Vice-President