



The Washington Performing Arts community is shocked and deeply disturbed by the murder of Yuriy Kerpatenko—Ukrainian conductor of the Mykola Kulish Kherson Music and Drama Theater, the Kherson Regional Philharmonic, and the Gilyea Chamber Orchestra. As reported by The Guardian (UK) and numerous other media outlets, Maestro Kerpatenko had refused to perform with Gilyea Chamber Orchestra in an “improvement of peaceful life” concert organized by occupying forces in Kherson, Ukraine. His resistance cost him his life.

Artists have long served as advocates—or as scapegoats—for advancing political and social agendas. As a community, Washington Performing Arts fundamentally condemns politically-motivated murder of artists carried out by governments or its citizens, and encourages freedom of speech and artistic expression. We recognize the privilege of our own American democracy, and how fragile art making and democracy truly are.

Throughout Washington Performing Arts’s 57-year history, we have remained committed to welcoming artists from around the globe, and sharing and experiencing diverse artistic expressions of international cultures. These are defining values of our organization, and of founder Patrick Hayes’s ethos, “everybody in, nobody out.” As Washington, D.C., resides at the intersection of diplomacy, government, global policy, business, arts, and industry, and we see representatives of these sectors in our seats at every performance, it’s all the more critical to “champion the unifying power of the arts,” as heralded in our mission.

In this season, which we have titled “The World In Our City,” many of our visiting artists are bringing works and programs that are specific to their heritage and culture — at our request. These cross-cultural experiences have the capacity to build transformative understanding, and empathy. We hope you will join us in this mission.