

UKRAINIAN FREEDOM ORCHESTRA

KERI-LYNN WILSON, MUSIC DIRECTOR

UNDER THE PATRONAGE
OF OLENA ZELENSKA,
FIRST LADY OF UKRAINE

Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra: Beethoven Ninth Freedom Tour

The Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra to regroup for a summer tour of the great cathedrals and concert halls of Europe and the United States

Program to feature Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in a unique Ukrainian language version to re-assert the values of freedom, resistance, and progress against the forces of oppression in the 200th-anniversary year of the symphony's composition

- July and August concert dates include Saint-Eustache Church in Paris ahead of the 2024 Olympics, St. Paul's Cathedral in London, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City as well as performances in Washington, D.C., Warsaw, and a special concert in the Polish shipyard that was instrumental in the birth of the Solidarity movement.
- The orchestra is under the patronage of Ukraine's First Lady, Olena Zelenska, and is resolute in its defence of Ukraine's artistic legacy on the cultural front

New York, NY (April 30, 2024)—Following its acclaimed 2022 and 2023 tours, the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra will once again assemble this July under the baton of its Canadian Ukrainian Founder and Music Director Keri-Lynn Wilson for a tour of great cathedrals and concert halls of Europe and the United States in a continuing demonstration of Ukrainian artistry as the nation fights for its freedom.

In the 200th-anniversary year of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the orchestra will present its acclaimed and emotionally charged version of the work with the unique feature of its choral text, Schiller's great cry of freedom, resistance, and progress against the forces of oppression in the form of his poem "Ode to Joy," sung by the soloists and chorus in Ukrainian.

A live recording of the orchestra's performance of the symphony was released earlier this year by Deutsche Grammophon to mark the second anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. [deutschegrammophon.com/en/projects/klw-ufo/keri-lynn-wilson-ufo-beethoven-ninth-2635](https://www.deutschegrammophon.com/en/projects/klw-ufo/keri-lynn-wilson-ufo-beethoven-ninth-2635)

The orchestra will also feature in a documentary film, which was premiered on April 28 at the Hot Docs Festival in Toronto, examining Beethoven's symphony within both historic and contemporary contexts of war and of hope. *Beethoven's 9: Ode to Humanity* features footage of the orchestra in rehearsal and performance as well as interviews with Keri-Lynn Wilson and other musicians. It will receive its TV premiere on Arte in May.

“The decision to sing Schiller’s great text for Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in Ukrainian was an important artistic and wider cultural statement for us,” explains Keri-Lynn Wilson. “Putin is literally trying to silence a nation. We will not be silenced. Our one amendment to Schiller is instead of singing ‘Freude’ (Joy) we will sing ‘Slava’ (Glory), from the shout of Ukrainian resistance in the face of ruthless Russian aggression, Slava Ukraini! (Glory to Ukraine!). As Ukraine continues its fight on behalf of the free world, it needs our support more than ever, and we will proudly take our message across Europe and the United States in an expression of love for Ukraine and our steadfastness in our resistance to tyranny.”

Under the patronage of Ukraine’s First Lady, Olena Zelenska, the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra will again bring together leading musicians based in Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and elsewhere in Ukraine alongside Ukrainian musicians forced into exile by the war and Ukrainian members of European orchestras.

“The Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra’s remarkable concert tours have seen it become not only the musical voice of Ukraine”, says First Lady Zelenska, “but a powerful cultural voice for everyone who cares about liberty in the face of aggression. I invite you to their 2024 Beethoven Ninth Freedom Tour, which, through the timeless medium of great art, will again assert that the message of hope and the values of humanity will never be vanquished.”

The orchestra was formed in 2022 by Keri-Lynn Wilson, in coordination with the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture, New York’s Metropolitan Opera, and the Polish National Opera in Warsaw. It was a direct response to Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine and a bold initiative to defend Ukraine’s cultural legacy as the country fights for its freedom in the face of violence and aggression. “On the day Putin invaded I was angry and appalled and immediately determined to do something to oppose this barbarism,” says Wilson. “Not just because I am of Ukrainian Canadian heritage, or because I have cousins who live in the country, some of whom have fought on the front line in Donbas, but because this assault on a nation and its culture demanded a response in kind. I could not take up arms, but I could take up my baton as my weapon.”

The orchestra will assemble in Warsaw for rehearsals under the auspices of the Polish National Opera. The tour will begin at the storied musical church of Saint-Eustache in Paris in the run up to the 2024 Paris Olympics. Concerts will follow at the Polish National Opera in Warsaw, St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

There will also be a special concert in a shipyard in Gdansk Bay, Poland, the birthplace of the Solidarity movement and a venue symbolic of the struggle for freedom and self-determination in the face of despotism. The concert in the dramatic setting of the Gdynia shipyard will be held under the honorary patronage of former President of Poland, founder of Solidarity and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Lech Wałęsa, who has been a staunch champion of the Ukrainian people in their moment of need.

The soloists for the tour will be Ukrainian singers Olga Bezsmertna (soprano), Nataliia Kukhar (mezzo-soprano), Valentyn Dytiuk (tenor), and Andrii Kymach (bass-baritone). The orchestra will be joined by local choirs with links to the wider Ukrainian community, including at St Paul’s Cathedral in London with the Royal Opera House’s Songs for Ukraine Chorus, which is made up of Ukrainian refugees and members of the Ukrainian London diaspora affected by the war, as well as members of the Royal Opera Chorus.

Each concert will open with a new work by acclaimed Ukrainian composer Victoria Vita Polevá entitled *Freedom*. The piece is the latest in a series of responses to the invasion composed by Polevá, including *Bucha. Lacrimosa*, created in memory of the innocent victims massacred at the hands of Russian invaders in the Ukrainian town of Bucha in 2022.

As part of the 2024 tour, the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra will also embark on a new initiative in working alongside the Baltic Opera Festival to present two fully staged performances of Puccini's *Turandot*. Both performances will be conducted by Keri-Lynn Wilson in the spectacular open-air surroundings of the Opera Leśna in Sopot on the Baltic coast, one of the largest amphitheatres in Europe.

The 2024 Beethoven Ninth Freedom Tour is sponsored by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Bruce and Suzie Kovner, and Ann Ziff. The tour is managed by the Polish National Opera in association with Askonas Holt.

Donate to Olena Zelenska Foundation to restore and improve people's lives in Ukraine.
zelenskafoundation.org

THE UKRAINIAN FREEDOM ORCHESTRA AND BEETHOVEN'S NINTH SYMPHONY

The Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra's performance version of Schiller's great poem "Ode to Joy," sung by the soloists and chorus in Ukrainian, and captured in the recent Deutsche Grammophon recording, follows in the tradition of another remarkable cultural and historical gesture. On Christmas Day 1989, just weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Leonard Bernstein conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the city and made one important change to the text. Bernstein altered Schiller's opening word "Freude" (Joy) to "Freiheit" (Freedom) and in so doing defined a moment of hope in German, and world, history. In making her performance version, the orchestra's founder and conductor, Keri-Lynn Wilson, working with her Ukrainian musical colleague Ievgeniia Iermachkova, changed "Freude" to "Slava" (Glory), from the phrase that has become familiar around the world as the rallying call of Ukrainian resistance in the face of ruthless Russian aggression, Slava Ukraini! (Glory to Ukraine!).

The orchestra's performances of the new performance version were the first time the symphony's text had been presented in translation outside of Ukraine. A concert in Warsaw, the occasion of the Deutsche Grammophon recording, was followed by a performance in Berlin on Ukrainian Independence Day, August 24, 2023. The orchestra and soloists were joined by the newly established Ukrainian Freedom Chorus, 40 singers made up of Ukrainian refugees and other residents in Berlin. The concert was attended by the Federal President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in a public show of support for Ukraine's fight for its freedom. Wilson subsequently took this version of the symphony back to Ukraine and performed it in Lviv in December 2023 with Lviv National Opera.

The Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra is drawn from Ukrainian ensembles including the Kyiv National Opera, Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra, Kyiv Camerata, Lviv National Opera, and Kharkiv Opera. Outside of Ukraine, players come from ensembles including the Tonkünstler Orchestra of Vienna, Belgian National Orchestra, and Staatskapelle Berlin. The Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy has been a staunch supporter of the project and has assisted in ensuring Ukrainian-based male members of the orchestra can leave the country and deploy their musical excellence as part of the wider war effort in a remarkable demonstration of the power of art over adversity.

The Metropolitan Opera and the Polish National Opera—under the leadership of General Manager Peter Gelb in New York and Waldemar Dabrowski, director of the PNO, in Warsaw—are proud to have founded and facilitated the orchestra and are delighted to again support the orchestra in its 2024 tour. Both the Met and the PNO continue to play leading roles in the cultural world in standing up to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine and in expressing support for the war’s victims.

The UFO’s tours in the summers of 2022 and 2023 took place in leading venues across Europe and the United States, such as the BBC Proms and the Barbican in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Hamburg’s Elbphilharmonie, Lincoln Center in New York City, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. as well as concert halls in Poland, France and Ireland. Their concerts showcased contemporary Ukrainian composers such as Silvestrov, Skoryk, and Stankovych alongside the greats of the wider European musical tradition and enjoyed a rapturous and emotional public response, critical acclaim, and unprecedented media attention for an artistic venture of this kind. The concerts received live television and radio broadcasts and attracted significant television news attention and extensive coverage in newspapers all over the world including, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *Le Monde*, *Die Welt*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and many others.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Maestro **Keri-Lynn Wilson** is the founding conductor and music director of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra. Her international career as a conductor of opera and symphonic music has taken her to many of the world’s leading opera houses and symphony orchestras. Among the opera companies she has conducted most recently are the Royal Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, the Paris Opera and the Deutsche Opera Berlin. Among the orchestras she has most recently led are the NHK Symphony, the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, and the Bruckner Orchestra of Linz. As a staunch supporter of Ukrainian liberty, Maestro Wilson also performed the Verdi Requiem at the Lviv Opera House to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the invasion and has returned to Ukraine to perform Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in a new performance version in Ukrainian that she created.

Victoria Vita Polevá is a renowned Ukrainian composer. From the late 1990s she has focused on spiritual themes and musical simplicity developing a style which has been identified as “sacred minimalism.” Her works have been performed by renowned musicians and artists such as Vladimir Jurowski, Keri-Lynn Wilson, and Volodymyr Sirenko and have been performed in prestigious venues all over the world, including the Berlin Philharmonie, Barbican Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Carnegie Hall, and others.

CONCERT ITINERARY AND PROGRAMS

July 12: Saint-Eustache Church, Paris
Presented in association with the City of Paris

July 14: Teatr Wielki, Warsaw

July 23: Gdynia Shipyard, Gdynia

July 29: July 29: St. Paul’s Cathedral, London
Presented by the Barbican, Royal Opera House, and Askonas Holt

August 1: The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City
Presented in association with Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

August 4: The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.

Program

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125

Victoria Vita Polevá: *Freedom*

Puccini's *Turandot* at the Baltic Opera Festival

July 20: Opera Leśna, Sopot

July 25: Opera Leśna, Sopot

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS PLEASE CONTACT:

Nicholas Wroe, Director of Media for the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra

nicholas.wroe@gmail.com +44 (0)7771 627566

UKRAINIAN FREEDOM ORCHESTRA

Keri-Lynn Wilson
Music Director

FIRST VIOLINS

Marko Komonko
Concertmaster
Royal Swedish Opera
Yaromyr Babsky
Tonkünstler Orchester
Viktor Ivanov
Kyiv Chamber Orchestra
Kyrolo Bondar
National Ensemble "Kyiv Camerata"
Mykola Haviuk
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Julia Rubanova
Kyiv Chamber Orchestra
Kyrolo Markiv
Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra
Alisa Kuznetsova
Estonian National Symphony Orchestra
Oleksandr Bozhyk
Lviv Opera House
Marta Semchyshyn
Lviv Opera House
Anna Bura
International Symphony Orchestra of Lviv
Marta Bura
Lviv Chamber Orchestra "Trembita"
Iryna Solovei
Kharkiv Opera House
Mihaly Stefko
Hungarian National Philharmonic

SECOND VIOLINS

Mykola Tsygankov
Orchestre National de Bretagne
Alina Komisarova
Royal Danish Orchestra
Roman Sokruta
INSO-Lviv
Adrian Bodnar
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Alisa Rubanova
National Philharmonic of Ukraine
Marta Kolomyiets
Rostock Philharmonic
Viktor Semchyshyn
Lviv Opera House
Maria Sichko
Lviv Chamber Orchestra "Virtuozy"
Liudvika Ivanova
Kyiv National Operetta's Theatre
Olga Malyk
Sudeten Philharmonic
Julia Tokach
K&K Philharmoniker
Hanna Vikhrova
Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra

VIOLAS

Andrii Chop
Kyiv Chamber Orchestra
Ustym Zhuk
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Kateryna Suprun
National Ensemble "Kyiv Camerata"
Dmytro Kreshchenskyi
Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra
Valentyna Bugrak
National Ensemble "Kyiv Camerata"
Andriy Tuchapets
National Ensemble "Kyiv Camerata"
Iya Komarova
Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra
Hryhorii Zavhorodnii
Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra
Roksolana Dubova
Lviv Academy Orchestra
Lyudmyla Garashchuk
Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra

CELLOS

Artem Shmahaylo
Antwerp Symphony Orchestra
Lesya Demkovich
Belgian National Orchestra
Yevgen Dovbysh
Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra
Denys Karachevtsev
Kharkiv Opera House
Vladyslav Primakov
National House of Organ
and Chamber Music
Viktor Rekalo
Kyiv Symphony Orchestra
Olha Boichuk
Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra
Julia Bezushkevych
Henryk Wieniawski Philharmonic in Lublin

BASSES

Ivan Zavhorodnii
Stavanger Symfoniorkester
Nazarii Stets
National Ensemble "Kyiv Camerata"
Yurii Pryriz
National Opera House of Ukraine
Mykola Shakhov
Gürzenich Orchester Köln Stellvertreter
Viktor Ashmarin
Kharkiv Opera House
Serhii Dikariev
Kharkiv Opera House

FLUTES

Ihor Yermak
National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine
Andriy Lemekh
Chamber Music Orchestra
of the Island of Menorca
Inna Vorobets
Poznań Philharmonic

OBOES

Yuriy Khvostov
Lviv Opera House
Yevhen Marchuk
Lviv Opera House

CLARINETS

Oleg Moroz
National Opera House of Ukraine
Vasyl Riabitskyi
Landespolizei Orchester Stuttgart

BASSOONS

Mark Kreshchenskyi
Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra
Roman Vasylchenko

CONTRABASSOON

Ihor Nechesnyi
National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine

HORNS

Igor Szeligowski
Polish National Opera
Oleg Bezushkevych
Henryk Wieniawski Philharmonic in Lublin
Yevhen Churikov
Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra
Stepan Bebykh
Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra

TRUMPETS

Ostap Popovych
Polish National Opera
Roman Kupriianov
Nationaltheater Mannheim

TROMBONES

Taras Zhelizko
National Opera House of Ukraine
Vasyl Shparkyi
Landestheater Flensburg
Andriy Shparkyi
Bremen Theater

TIMPANI

Dmytro Ilin
National Philharmonic of Ukraine

PERCUSSION

Yevhen Ulianov
National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine
Sviatoslav Yanchuk
Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra

BEETHOVEN NINTH FREEDOM TOUR



PARIS

07.12.24

WARSAW

07.14.24

SOPOT

07.20.24 & 07.25.24

GDYNIA

07.23.24

LONDON

07.29.24

NEW YORK CITY

08.01.24

WASHINGTON, D.C.

08.04.24

UKRAINIAN FREEDOM ORCHESTRA

KERI-LYNN WILSON, CONDUCTOR

VICTORIA VITA POLEVÁ, COMPOSER

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF
OLENA ZELENSKA, FIRST LADY OF UKRAINE

PRODUCED BY
ASKONAS HOLT AND TEATR WIELKI-POLISH NATIONAL OPERA
IN ASSOCIATION WITH UKRAINIAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND
INFORMATION POLICY AND THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

Donate to the Ukrainian Ministry
of Culture and Information Policy
to support Ukrainian artists.
Visit restore.mkp.gov.ua

Bloomberg
Philanthropies

Ann Ziff
Chairman of the Metropolitan Opera

Bruce and Suzie Kovner

TOUR ORGANIZED BY
 Askonas Holt