

Grateful for support, Ukraine to send in active duty artists on a tour
to US

Kyiv, April 25, 2024

Thanks to US strong support including through the passage of the national security supplemental, Ukraine substantially better its military capabilities on the battlefield.

Acknowledging America's leading role in helping Ukraine restore its territorial integrity and returning peace to Europe, Cultural Forces, the cultural arm of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, will bring five musicians for a tour in US to thank the American people for the unrelenting support.

In a 40-day-long tour, Cultural Forces will visit New-York, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Washington DC and a few other cities.

Through their direct experience of war, the artists will present Ukrainian culture to NGOs, university and religious communities, trade unions as well as ordinary Americans. Most of them have fought in some of the fiercest battles of the war, and several were seriously wounded but after recovering have returned to active duty. 'In war, saving the soul and human face has the highest value whereas culture restates itself as an ultimately confident guide at most testing times,' – artists say. The existential war has acutely accentuated the Ukrainian identity. The artists reaffirm that they are a living testament to how culture nurtures the visceral feeling of pride in the nation and an everlasting love of freedom.

Cultural Forces will produce a documentary as a result of the tour. It will reflect on Ukraine's support in US through reactions and feedback of the American public to artists' personal war stories. As a testimony, it will show how arts can unify people around without words.

Mykolai Sierga (Sr. Lieutenant, 59 Separate Mechanized Brigade) is a famous Ukrainian presenter, musician and producer.

Taras Stoliar (Sr. Soldier, Reconnaissance Operative, 112 Separate Brigade, Territorial Defense Forces) is a People's Artist of Ukraine, a graduate of Chernivtsi music school and National Music Academy, the first prize bandura player of the First Hnat Khotkevych International Folk Instruments Competition, he is a soloist of the NAONI Orchestra.

Olha Rukavishnikova (Sr. Soldier, Reconnaissance Operative, Grenade Launcher Operator, 112 Separate Brigade, Territorial Defense Forces) is a

violin player, conductor and symphonist, a graduate of the National Music Academy and a laureate of international music competitions.

Yurii Ivaskevych (Sergeant, Infantryman, Grenade Launcher Operator Ast., 110 Separate Brigade, Territorial Defense Forces) is a former vocalist and soloist of the Zaporozhtsi Song and Dance Ensemble at Zaporizhzhia Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mykhailo Oliinyk (Soldier, 59 Separate Mechanized Brigade) is a a composer and pianist, a Stanislav Lyudkevych Prize Laureate, a graduate of Glier Kyiv Municipal Music Academy and Lyssenko Lviv National Music Academy.

Performances will feature renditions of a wide variety of music, from Ukrainian and world classical pieces to covers of popular hits including by a master of the traditional Ukrainian string instrument, the bandura.

This tour is supported by the Ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Information of Ukraine.

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