



TV

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

UN IN ACTION

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Programme: 1489

Length: 4:53

Languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish, Russian

CONCERTO FOR UNITING NATIONS

VIDEO

DESERTED CORRIDORS/CLEANER
VACUUMING THE CARPETS
VIEW OF EMPIRE STATE BUILDING FROM 27th
FLOOR WINDOW

TIMELAPSE OF REHERSAL SPACE
ORCHESTRA MEMBERS WALK PAST WITH
INSTRUMENT CASES

PREDRAG IN REHEARSALS WITH MUSICIANS

PREDRAG B-ROLL

AUDIO

NARRATION:

At United Nations Headquarters in New York, every Wednesday evening a conference room becomes alive.

(SOUND RISES - ORCHESTRA MUSIC)

But in contrast to the briefings and discussions of the day, UN staff are gathering here tonight for a meeting of music.

PREDRAG VASIC: (In English) M

"I was intrigued by the possibility that in an Organisation as big as the United Nations there had to be other people who have some musical experience."

Predrag Vasic is the President and Music Director of the UN Symphony Orchestra of the United Nations Staff Recreation Council.

PREDRAG VASIC: (In English) M

"I used to be a Musical Director and a

PREDRAG ON-CAMERA

INTERSPERSE WITH B-ROLL

Conductor in a Musical Theater in Belgrade, in Serbia. In 1991, I came to the United States, to New York, on vacation during the summer. And during that summer, a very ferocious civil war broke out in what was then Yugoslavia.”

Predrag settled in New York and built a successful career working for the United Nations in information technology. But one day, by chance, he came across an article about UN Staff in Geneva who had formed their own symphony orchestra. Almost twenty years since he had left his former career in Belgrade, he saw an opportunity to bring his first love of music back to life- and back to the stage.

Initially, twelve people responded to his call for participants. But word soon spread.

PREDRAG VASIC: (In English) M

“I brought Schubert’s ‘Unfinished Symphony’, a wonderful, romantic score, early 19th Century. We didn’t have all the instruments that we needed, but we had the critical ones, so that when we played this piece, it sounded reasonably complete. It was a personal rush for me, and I think it was just as exciting for the others, in the ensemble.”

ARCHIVAL REHEARSAL FOOTAGE

MONTAGE/SPLIT SCREEN OF PERFORMERS
WITH THEIR INSTRUMENTS

Now the Orchestra has over 80 musicians ...from more than 30 countries around the globe.

Principal Trumpet Randy Rydell formerly

RYDELL AT REHEARSALS

worked with in the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

RANDY RYDELL ON-CAMERA

RANDY RYDELL: (In English) M
"In a way, the orchestra is a little like a microcosm of how the UN should operate when it's working well. People playing with the same goals in mind and in harmony rather than fighting each other. And that's why I like playing in this orchestra."

NYU STAGE PREPPING OF INSTRUMENTS ETC.

For their highest profile concert, the UN Symphony Orchestra played to a full house at a gala concert at New York University's Skirball Center for the Performing Arts last May.

AUDIENCE B-ROLL

A thousand-strong audience had the privilege of being the first to hear the world premiere of 'Concerto for the United Nations' – a piece written especially for the orchestra by Composer Michael Vongova in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the UN.

BRENDA ON STAGE PERFORMING

Michael's fiancée, Brenda Vongova, a classically trained pianist who works in the Secretary General's Speechwriting and Communications Unit, performed the Concerto's solo.

BRENDA ON CAMERA

BRENDA VONGOVA: (In English) F
"I fell in love with his music."

MICHAEL AND BRENDA ON-CAMERA

MICHAEL VONGOVA: (In English) M
"I remember being in Conservatory and I was

writing, working on a Concerto at the time and I remember thinking how lovely it would be to fall in love with someone and have this person perform the Concerto solo, and that's basically what has happened."

(EXCERPT 'CONCERTO FOR THE UNITED NATIONS')

NYU PERFORMANCE

NARRATION:

Other pieces that night included Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, as well as works by Smetana and Rimsky-Korsakov.

PERFORMANCE, PREDRAG CONDUCTING/
AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

(EXCERPTS MUSICAL PERFORMANCE)

PREDRAG CONDUCTS FINAL NOTE

The performance may have ended, but it is not the swan song for this extraordinary ensemble, who will continue to unite nations in music for many years to come.

UN LOGO

This report was produced by Grace Barrett for the United Nations.