



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

## Discours de la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO,

**Irina Bokova,**

**à l'occasion de la cérémonie de nomination d'Elisso Bolkvadzé en qualité  
d'Artiste de l'UNESCO pour la paix**

**UNESCO, le 22 janvier 2015**

Madame Elisso Bolkvadzé,

S.E. Ecaterine Siradze-Delaunay, Déléguée Permanent de la Géorgie auprès de  
l'UNESCO,

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

C'est un grand plaisir de vous accueillir pour la nomination de Madame Elisso  
Bolkvadzé en qualité d'Artiste de l'UNESCO pour la paix.

Nous connaissons son énorme talent -- nous connaissons aussi son engagement  
pour les causes qui nous rassemblent.

Les droits de l'homme, la dignité de chacun, l'éducation, les sciences, la culture, la  
communication et l'information -- l'importance du mandat de l'UNESCO depuis 70  
ans est soulignée tous les jours.

A cet égard, l'action de l'UNESCO est d'autant plus forte qu'elle peut compter sur le  
soutien de sa famille des Ambassadeurs honoraires et de bonne volonté, des  
artistes pour la paix, pour sensibiliser l'opinion publique et promouvoir ces objectifs  
auprès du plus grand nombre.

L'éducation artistique occupe une place importante dans ce travail -- comme  
vecteur de créativité, comme force de dialogue, de compréhension mutuelle -- pour  
former des générations capables de réinventer le monde dont elles héritent.

L'éducation n'est pas seulement la transmission d'un savoir – elle est un apprentissage de soi-même, une invitation à inventer, à s'ouvrir aux autres, et la transmission du goût de l'art, qui donne accès au cœur de l'humain, contribue à l'édification d'un patrimoine commun, à la construction d'une citoyenneté tolérante pour un monde globalisé.

Dear Elisso Bolkvadze,

You once said:

*Music is a space – it is everywhere you are.*

This, I believe, expresses the universal nature of music – its capacity to bring women and men together as a single family, in a single space.

You have always carried this 'space' in you, starting with singing at the age of two years old and moving to the piano at the age of three.

Your orchestral debut was held at the age of seven, with the Georgian National Orchestra, and you gave your first recital at the age of twelve.

You studied with Tatiana Nikolaeva in Moscow and with the Professor and composer Michel Sogny in France.

You have played with orchestras across the globe and won the most prestigious prizes – the *Van Cliburn International Competition*, the *Vianna da Motta*, and the *Axa International Piano Competition* as well as a special prize for best interpretation of French music from the *Marguerite Long Competition*.

Critics and spectators agree -- you play with intensity, you play with personality, you play, most of all, with passion, with your heart.

This is a passion for sharing the power of music.

This has inspired you as the Director of the *Batumi International Music Festival* in Georgia – to promote classical music and traditional Georgian folklore and provide a stage for new and local artists.

This same passion led you to create the *LYRA Foundation* in 2012, to identify and support young Georgian talents.

As you once said:

*I do all this for classical music. Only a small percentage of young people love or are interested in classical music and if they don't have some motivation, this interest will disappear altogether.*

Ladies and gentlemen,

These goals guide all of UNESCO's work, to protect the values and heritage humanity holds in common, to strengthen bridges of dialogue, mutual respect and understanding, as foundations for human rights and dignity, for more lasting peace.

For this, there is no more powerful force than art, for expressing beauty, for bringing people together.

In this spirit, allow me to quote from the poem *Spring* by the great Georgian poet, Akaki Tsereteli, with whose anniversary UNESCO is honoured to be associated this year:

*Sweet is the essence of the rose;*

*The violet droops before my eye;*

*The nightingale her lays of love*

*Pours forth in thrilling melody.*

In the middle of winter, sometimes only art -- and especially music -- can remind us of the 'thrilling melody' of spring.

This is the spirit of all UNESCO's work, for 70 years, to deepen solidarity between women and men, between all societies, through dialogue, through cooperation and joint action, through dialogue between cultures and across societies.

Dear Elisso Bolkvadze, I thank you for joining with UNESCO in this task.

It is now my great honour to welcome you to the UNESCO family – I wish you every success in your new capacity.