



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,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the ceremony to designate Mr Teodosii Spassov as
UNESCO Artist for Peace (2015-2017)**

Sofia, 16 September 2015

Excellency Ambassador Savov, Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Bulgaria to
UNESCO,

Ms Katya Todorova, Chair of the National Commission of Bulgaria for UNESCO,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Dear Theodosii Spassov,

UNESCO is the House of Culture for all humanity, where diversity is celebrated on
the basis of shared values and aspirations.

One of the most enjoyable – and important -- parts of my job as Director-General is
to highlight the work of exceptional artists devoted to building bridges of dialogue
between people.

Today, I must say it is a special pleasure when this concerns an exceptional artist
from Bulgaria, a musical hero of my country, recognised across the world as a
master of Kaval...

The famous American musician Howard Rovics once said about Theodosii
Spassov:

His work on the Kaval is nothing short of pure genius.

Newsweek magazine recognized Teodosii Spassov as one of the most talented Eastern European musicians, noting that he had invented a new musical genre.

These accolades reflect a lifetime of success.

Since his early training at the *Kotel Music School* and the *Academy of Music and Dance* in Plovdiv, Teodosii Spassov has pushed the boundaries of his art, and he has done so always in collaboration, sharing his talent across the world, with the vocal ensemble *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares*, with the *Riverdance* company, performing in the most prestigious halls of the United States, France, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Israel, Turkey, Japan, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and many others.

Each of us here knows the melodies Teodosii Spassov wrote for the cinema, in Bulgaria and beyond, working with Carlos Siliotto and Ennio Morricone, in such films as *An Italian Story* and *The Breakout of the Innocent*.

Teodosii Spassov, this global recognition reflects the spirit you bring to your music.

It reflects the creativity you bring to playing Kaval, one of Europe's oldest instruments, and your commitment to synthesizing traditional folklore with modern influences, with classical music, with jazz.

I am delighted jazz holds a special place in your musical career.

As you know, 30 April has been proclaimed by UNESCO as *International Jazz Day*, with support of Herbie Hancock, *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador*.

This International Day shines the spotlight on the power of music to cross all borders, to bring people together around beauty, joy and inspiration.

This is culture as a force for peace, renewing itself and renewing societies, building on traditions to innovate, drawing women and men together, around shared values.

As you once said:

My dream to play with other musicians, from jazz, from folk and classical. I think this will be the new way in this century. We need to live together now.

In this year, as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, this message of living together has never been so important.

We need the spirit of music, to join people – especially young women and men – together, to nurture freedom and dialogue, to create new bridges of respect and understanding, for greater tolerance and cooperation.

Dear Teodosii Spassov,

In your capacity as Artistic Director of the *Philip Koutev Ensemble of Music, Drama and Dance* and as a soloist of the Bulgarian National Radio, I am honoured to welcome you to the UNESCO family to take our message of peace across the world.

On this quest, as a *UNESCO Artist for Peace*, you join forces with such ‘greats’ as the American musician, Marcus Miller, the Russian pianist, Serguei Markarov, the Cameroonian jazz musician Manu Dibango, the Brazilian singer Gilberto Gil and many others.

Each of these outstanding artists has generously accepted to use their name and fame to spread the ideals and goals of UNESCO.

We are living in times of great change, when societies are transforming, when culture is under attack, when artists and heritage are targeted, when violent extremism is rife.

Today, more than ever, we must join all forces of culture and solidarity, to strengthen humanity as a single community, united in its diversity, sharing values and a destiny.

To nurture peace, to advance human dignity and social justice – art, music, and creativity are essential.

This is the raison d'être of UNESCO, and this is, I believe, the red thread that is woven throughout your life and career.

Dear Teodosii Spassov,

In this spirit, in recognition of your dedication and achievements towards our common goals, it gives me great pleasure to officially designate you today as a *UNESCO Artist for Peace*.

[Reading of diploma]

I wish you every success in your new mission.

Thank you.