

21 May 2023

Mr. John Allison
Opera Magazine
36 Black Lion Lane
London W6 9 BE

Dear Mr. Allison,

I am Anna Netrebko's general manager. I am writing to you regarding "Cancellation: an account" by Warwick Thompson that appears in the June 2023 issue of Opera Magazine.

The piece contains statements that are slanderous and malicious. You have a duty of care to fact check the information that appears in the pages of your publication. As such, I ask that you print this right of response.

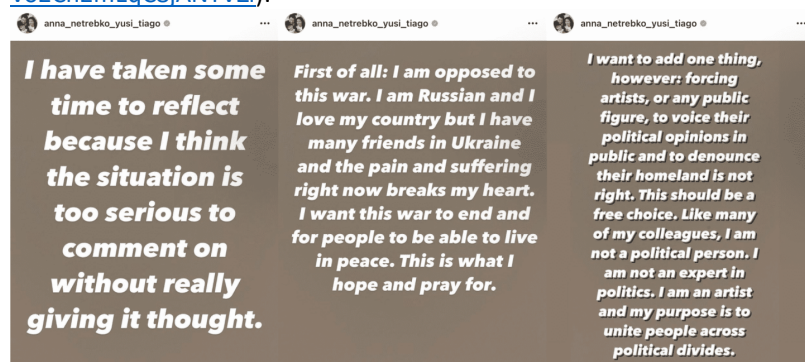
- "She condemned the war in Ukraine only after much pressure to do so." This is false¹. Anna Netrebko's first message about the war in Ukraine appeared on her Instagram account on 25

¹ - Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

- Anna Netrebko and Yusif Eyvazov were scheduled to give a performance at the Aarhus Musikhuset on 25 February 2022.

- Anna Netrebko posted a message on Instagram on 25 February 2022 as follows: "In light of current events and due to significant concerns for the safety and security of all involved, we are forced to postpone our concert in Aarhus tonight. These are very sad days and we are deeply concerned for the well-being of all people involved. Every war is a terrible tragedy. This is not a time for music but for reflection and prayer. And so we hope and pray for a swift and peaceful resolution." <https://operawire.com/anna-netrebko-yusif-eyvazov-cancel-concert-release-joint-statement/>. Musikhuset Aarhus issued a statement quoting part of that message <https://www.musikhuset.dk/kalender/anna-netrebko>.

- Anna Netrebko posted a message on Instagram on 26 February 2022 as follows (it is still available on her Facebook page (<https://facebook.com/annanetrebko/posts/pfbid0BsWqjyUu1EY5Sv9aFXzysxxW5HwFvtdymBQ8g9UswLFjaM4Vo2Ch2mEqC8jANYVZl>):



- Anna posted a message on Instagram on 1 March 2022 as follows:

February 2022, one day after Russia's invasion of Ukraine began. Anna Netrebko expressed her first direct opposition to the war on 26 February 2022; she did it again on 1 March 2022. The statement that appeared on 30 March 2022 only reiterated a condemnation that she had made more than once over a month before. She further repeated her position in major interviews in French and German newspapers in May and June 2022.

- "...and was happy to be photographed in St. Petersburg holding a Russian-separated flag." This is false.² Anna Netrebko explained in the New York Times that she had not been forewarned about the presence of a separatist leader at the press conference nor that he would unfurl a flag at the last minute before photos were taken.
- "He also fined Netrebko \$30,000 for a social media statement she released shortly after the invasion. She called out her critics thus: 'People from the West [...] are pretending to be brave, putting artists in trouble [...] This is just hypocrisy of them. They are human shits. They are as evil as blind aggressors, no matter which side they are from.'" This is false³. Anna



- Anna Netrebko issued a statement on 30 March 2022 as follows: "I expressly condemn the war on Ukraine and my thoughts are with the victims of this war and their families. My position is clear. I am not a member of any political party nor am I allied with any leader of Russia. I acknowledge and regret that past actions or statements of mine could have been misinterpreted. In fact, I have met President Putin only a handful of times in my entire life, most notably on the occasion of receiving awards in recognition of my art or at the Olympics opening ceremony. I have otherwise never received any financial support from the Russian Government, and live and am a tax resident in Austria. I love my homeland of Russia and only seek peace and unity through my art. After taking my announced break, I will resume performing in late May, initially in Europe."
- Anna Netrebko gave interviews in Le Monde (22-23 May 2022) and Die Zeit (2 June 2022) in which she reiterated her condemnation of the war.

² <https://archive.nytimes.com/artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/12/09/donation-to-ukrainian-opera-house-puts-netrebko-in-a-political-spotlight/>

³ <https://twitter.com/zwoolfe/status/1497674011660238854>

Netrebko did not write these words; she reposted a message from a fan. The fan confirmed this to New York Times journalist Zachary Woolfe on his Twitter account. Although the arbitrator had this evidence, he inexplicably issued this flawed ruling. The arbitration rules in the United States make it practically impossible to appeal such a decision, otherwise Anna Netrebko would have asked the American Guild of Musical Artists to demand that the arbitrator reconsider this blatant error.

All the best,

Miguel Esteban

