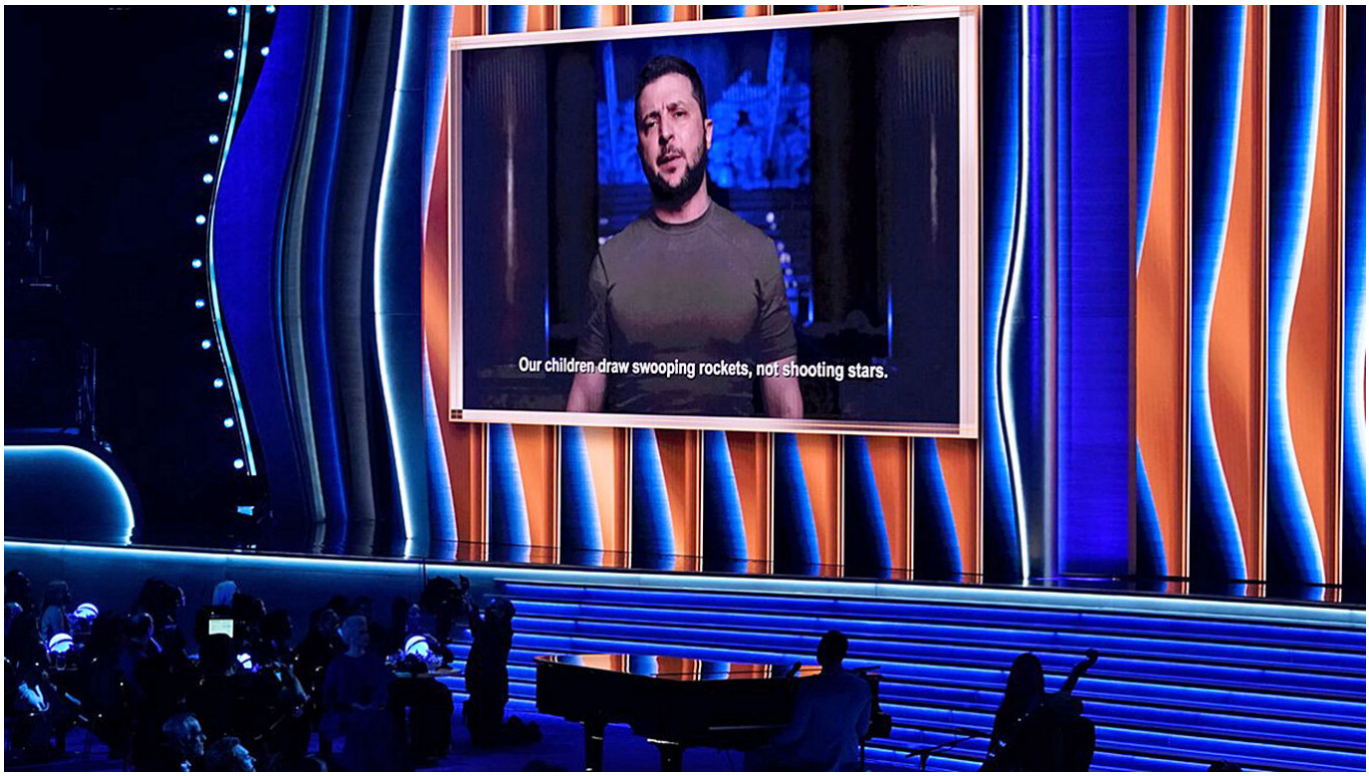
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U.S. Music Awards Welcome Ukrainian President

Zelensky appealed to the music industry to help.

By Ali Sar

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The highlight of the Grammy music awards presentation in Las Vegas on Sunday turned was the appearance of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who in a pre-taped address told audience to spread the "truth about this war" and asked for support.

"War. What could be more the antithesis of music but the silence of ruined cities and murdered people."

Zelensky said that hundreds of children had been wounded or killed.

"Parents are happy to wake up in the morning in bomb shelters. They are alive. Our loved ones don't know if we will be together again.

“Our musicians wear body armor instead of tuxedos. They sing to the wounded in hospitals,” he said.

“Support us in any way you can,” he pleaded. “Tell our story. Tell the truth about the war and on your social networks and on television.”

The president’s address was followed by a musical tribute with singer John Legend on the piano accompanying Ukrainian singer Mika Newton and Lyuba Yakimchuk, who read a poem.

Abramovich and the Hollywood connection

Meanwhile, it appears that show business is at the heart of Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich’s appearance at the Russian/Ukrainian talks in Turkey.

The Wall Street Journal reports that Abramovich’s involvement started with a phone call from movie producer Alexander Rodnyansky.

Kyiv native Rodnyansky, who worked in Moscow for many years, is a well-known producer and businessman across the continents. His 2017 film “Loveless” and 2014 Golden Globe-winning “Leviathan” assured him prominence in the world of movies and business.

Rodnyansky reportedly contacted Abramovich on behalf of Ukrainian president Zelensky, a long-time show business associate. The television show “Servant of the People,” in which Zelensky played the role of Ukrainian president, aired on a Rodnyansky channel. Rodnyansky’s son is also a presidential advisor in Ukraine.

Rodnyansky knows Abramovich through the oligarch’s funding of independent cinema in Russia.

Given Abramovich’s close contacts on both sides of the negotiating table, he was a natural “special envoy.” However, negotiations do not appear to have moved forward.

Reported by Ali Sar.

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