

Remarks at PBS's "A Broadway Celebration: In Performance at the White House"

July 19, 2010

Well, welcome to the White House. I am just thrilled, and I know Michelle is thrilled, to host the sixth in a series of evenings celebrating the music that helped to shape America.

Now, so far we have heard from some of the biggest names in jazz, in country, in Latin, classical, and the music of the civil rights movement. And tonight we are honored to be joined by some of the biggest and brightest stars on Broadway.

And I notice—I should just point out that I see a lot of members of the New York delegation here. [*Laughter*] They take great pride in Broadway. I want to start by thanking George C. Wolfe and Margo Lion for making this event possible. So please give them a big round of applause. And I want to thank all of tonight's performers for sharing their gifts with us. They are just so generous with their time, and this will be a wonderful evening.

I also want to recognize my outstanding Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, who is in the house. Here she is right here. As well as the other members of the administration—thank you guys for the hard work you do each and every day. Thank you to the National Endowment for the Arts and the President's council on the arts and the humanities for their continued support. And I finally want to recognize Jerry Mitchell and everybody who participated in the dance workshop earlier this afternoon and helped inspire the next generation of performers—as well as my wife—to do a few dances. [*Laughter*] She was showing off backstage.

Now, as we're about to see this evening, there's nothing quite like the power and the passion of Broadway music. At its heart, it's the power of a story: of love and of heartbreak, of joy and sorrow, singing witches, dancing ogres. Musicals carry us to a different time and place, but in the end, they also teach us a little bit of something about ourselves. It's one of the few genres of music that can inspire the same pas-

sion in an 8-year-old that it can an 80-year-old, and make them both want to get up and dance. It transcends musical tastes, from opera and classical to rock and hip-hop. And whether we want to admit it or not, we all have the lyrics to a few Broadway songs stuck in our heads. [*Laughter*]

In many ways, the story of Broadway is also intertwined with the story of America. Some of the greatest singers and songwriters Broadway has ever known came to this country on a boat with nothing more than an idea in their head and a song in their heart. And they succeeded the same way that so many immigrants have succeeded, through talent and hard work and sheer determination.

Over the years, musicals have also been at the forefront of our social consciousness, challenging stereotypes, shaping our opinions about race and religion, death and disease, power and politics.

But perhaps the most American part of this truly American art form is its optimism. Broadway music calls us to see the best in ourselves and in the world around us, to believe that no matter how hopeless things may seem, the nice guy can still get the girl, the hero can still triumph over evil, and a brighter day can be waiting just around the bend.

As the great Mel Brooks once said, musicals "blow the dust off your soul." So to everyone watching, both here and at home, here's a taste of Broadway to help us do just that.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to George C. Wolfe, private member, and Margo Lion, cochair, President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities; Broadway theater director and choreographer Jerry Mitchell; and entertainer Mel Brooks.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom July 20, 2010

President Obama. Good afternoon, everybody. Please have a seat. It is my great pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Cameron on his first visit to the White House as Prime Minister.

We have just concluded some excellent discussions, including whether the beers from our hometowns that we exchanged are best served warm or cold. My understanding is, is that the Prime Minister enjoyed our 312 beer, and we may send him some more. I thought the beer we got was excellent, but I did drink it cold. [Laughter]

Mr. Prime Minister, we can never say it enough: The United States and the United Kingdom enjoy a truly special relationship. We celebrate a common heritage. We cherish common values. And we speak a common language, most of the time. We honor the sacrifices of our brave men and women in uniform who have served together, bled together, and even lay at rest together.

Above all, our alliance thrives because it advances our common interests. Whether it's preventing the spread of nuclear weapons or securing vulnerable nuclear materials, thwarting terrorist attacks or confronting climate change or promoting global economic growth and development, when the United States and the United Kingdom stand together, our people, and people around the world, are more secure and they are more prosperous.

In short, the United States has no closer ally and no stronger partner than Great Britain. And I appreciate the opportunity to renew our relationship with my partner, Prime Minister Cameron.

In his campaign, David was known for his extensive town hall discussions with voters: "Cameron Direct." And that's the same spirit that we had here today. I appreciate David's steady leadership and his pragmatic approach. And just as he's off to an energetic start at home, I think we've had a brilliant start as partners who see eye to eye on virtually every challenge before us.

Great Britain is one of our largest trading partners, and we're committed to long-term, sustainable growth that keeps the global economy growing and puts our people to work. I told David that my administration's working hard with the Senate to move forward as soon as possible with our defense trade treaty with the U.K., which will be good for our workers and our troops in both our countries.

We reaffirmed our commitment to fiscal responsibility and reform. David's government is making some courageous decisions, and I've set a goal of cutting our deficit in half by 2013. Tomorrow I'll sign into law the toughest financial reforms since the aftermath of the Great Depression. And I commend David for his leadership in Europe to rebuild confidence in the financial sector. Together, we're determined to make sure the financial catastrophe that we are emerging from never happens again.

We discussed the Middle East, where both our governments are working to encourage Israelis and Palestinians to move to direct talks as soon as possible.

We discussed the continuing threat posed by Iran's nuclear program. On this we are united: The Iranian Government must fulfill its international obligations. The new sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council, the United States, and other countries are putting unprecedented pressure on the Iranian Government. And I thanked David for Great Britain's efforts to ensure strong European Union sanctions in the coming days.

Along with our P-5-plus-1 partners, we remain committed to a diplomatic solution. But the Iranian Government must understand that the path of defiance will only bring more pressure and more isolation.

Finally, much of our discussion focused on Afghanistan. After the United States, Great Britain is the largest contributor of combat forces in Afghanistan, and British troops and civilians have served and sacrificed in some of the most dangerous parts of the country.