

Fingerhut Ukraine video raises £13,000

British pianist Margaret Fingerhut's music video raising funds for the people of Ukraine has now raised £13,000 and rising. As a result, British-Ukrainian Aid, a charity that sends vital supplies such as first aid kits and portable generators, has been able to provide an ambulance, and the fund is well on the way to a second.

The project is a succinct answer to the question: How can a musician react to the horrors of war? For Fingerhut, it was not enough to sit wringing hands in anger and disbelief. She has long been associated with humanitarian causes – in 2019 she began an extensive recital tour, 'Far from the Home I Love', to raise money for refugees and asylum seekers, winning a 'Champion of Sanctuary' award for her efforts.

For Ukraine, she wanted to make a music video, again with the practical aim of raising funds, something that would both acknowledge the atrocities while injecting a hint of hope. She put out the word that she would like to work with a Ukrainian filmmaker and was introduced to Viktoriia Levchenko. The eventual result was *Ukraine will rise again!* – a powerful video



ANDY TYLER

Margaret Fingerhut: using music 'to do more than just entertain people'



that packs quite a punch in its seven minutes.

The music that Fingerhut chose for the video is 'Les Rochers d'Outche-Coche' from *Esquisses de Crimée* by the Ukrainian composer Sergei Bortkiewicz (1877-1952), a piece that encompasses awe and serenity in its short span. The video opens with footage of pre-war Ukraine in all its beauty, people going about their daily lives. Then come the horror scenes so familiar from our TV screens – against serenely calm music. Margaret Fingerhut explains: 'We made the decision that at the most beautiful point, the Liszt-like melody that starts in the middle, sounding a bit like *Liebesträume* but not quite, that would be the point where she would make the mismatch between this beautiful music and the scenes of war.'

For Fingerhut there is a personal link in that her paternal grandfather was born in Odesa, coming to the UK to escape antisemitism. And if narrow-minded nationalism is still prevalent globally – Fingerhut suffered some anti-immigrant trolling during her 'Far from the

Home I Love' project – she has no time for those who suggest musicians should keep out of politics. 'I ask how as a musician I can use my gifts to do more than just entertain people, without doing the whole political thing,' she says. 'What else can we do? Otherwise we'd never get out of bed in the morning.'

Her next focus is on the women of Iran, working with Iranian composer Farhad Poupel, whose Duo for violin and piano she premiered last November with Bradley Creswick at Sage Gateshead. 'This Iranian project is very much work in progress but we're talking with a narrator, a singer and Bradley to do a programme in support of women in Iran. The words and music will draw attention to the role of women in Persian mythology and culture to demonstrate their importance through the history of this once great nation, now under the yoke of a bunch of religious extremists.'

Meanwhile, Fingerhut is hoping to get more eyes and ears on the Ukraine video, all the time aware how compassion fatigue can set in as the war drags on. 'A lot of people

have already donated generously, and the media and social media have kind of moved on. It's partly mental self-preservation.

'The video has had an incredible reaction. People say how much it has moved them. Everyone's seen all the images before but if you combine them with a piece of stirring music it really does tap an emotional response in a way the mere images can't do, shocking though they might be.'

For Fingerhut it was important that the video should end with a sense of hope. 'Ultimately it ends in an uplifting way: there is serenity. We included a couple of powerful quotes from Volodymyr Zelensky and they really do pack a punch. "If we remain silent today, tomorrow we shall be gone," he says. That couldn't be a more appropriate quote to use, in terms of music as well.'

KEITH CLARKE

Ukraine will rise again! is available to view on Margaret Fingerhut's YouTube channel: [y2u.be/q-JzjaC_Gfw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2u.be/q-JzjaC_Gfw) – donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/Margaret-Fingerhut