



the invasion of Ukraine, which was first performed in a parish church in

Phil McCarthy

St Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth Common, played host to the premiere of 'A Prayer for Ukraine' this week, with funds raised going to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine appeal.

He explained: "How can a composer respond to a global tragedy?

"I suppose by writing music: like everybody I have been shocked and dismayed by the events of recent days.

"The first thing I wanted to do was write music that would respond in my own way.

"I went to a late-night service in my old college chapel where they sang a setting of a lovely Ukrainian prayer so having encountered the Ukrainian text, on Thursday I wrote my own music.

"I hope the meaning of the text will resonate in people's hearts."

The words of the piece, which are originally in Ukrainian, translate into English as: "Good Lord protect the Ukraine. Give her strength, courage, faith, and hope. Amen."

He added: "I hope it speaks in terms which reach out to the Ukrainian people in their hour of need."

The piece was performed by a group of 300 singers at a Singing Day event in South London. The singers raised £2,600 for the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine appeal.

The Vicar of St Mary's, the Revd Philippa Boardman, said: "We all feel helpless in the face of the terrible suffering of the people of Ukraine. But we can all offer our prayers.

"We thank John Rutter for the profound privilege of choosing 300 ordinary people like us, gathered in south London for a 'Singing Day', to sing his 'out-of-the-ordinary' anthem for the extraordinary people of Ukraine.

"May it, in some small way, inspire others to pray, and to remember Ukraine at this devastating time."

The church's music director, Barry Holden, added: "We sing John Rutter's carols and anthems year in year out, but this new work is strikingly different – a mosaic of sound reminiscent of the orthodox tradition."

He added: "I hope we've done it justice and that churches, cathedrals and musicians around the world also embrace his new work."

More information:

- [More information about how churches can respond to the invasion of Ukraine and information on giving.](#)
- [Choirs wishing to perform the piece can request the music from John Rutter's website.](#)

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