

Edinburgh granny behind BA Robertson song released as Ukraine fundraiser

A song by Scottish singer songwriter BA Robertson – Silent Running – is released on Friday to support aid for children from Ukraine.

The back story is one of happy coincidence involving an Edinburgh granny, Lorri Hales.

When the song popped up at random on a car playlist, on a journey to visit her grandchildren, Lorri was moved to tears. She thought it was highly relevant to the current situation in Ukraine, conjuring images of the ordinary people like her – children, parents, grandparents – whose lives were suddenly blown apart.

“Take the children and yourself And hide out in the cellar By now the fighting will be close at hand...”

Words from the song Silent Running

The words of the song struck a chord with Lorri, particularly the lyrics about keeping guns and ammunition close at hand, and the haunting chorus *“Can you hear me?”*

Lorri realised that it could be a great way to try to raise money to help people in Ukraine.

She knew her partner knew BA – that was why he had the previously unreleased track on his playlist – and insisted that he call the singer/songwriter immediately to ask if he would allow the song to be released as a fundraiser for Ukrainian people, for the children and refugees.

BA agreed, a partnership with [Mail Force – Ukraine Appeal](#) charity ensued, and the song is released on Friday with all proceeds going to the charity appeal.



Lorri Hales near her home at Gartloch. PHOTO Robert Perry
Silent Running has a long track record as a song that speaks across generations and times. Written by [BA Robertson](#) and Mike Rutherford, the original version – the first single release by Mike and the Mechanics – was a global hit, including several weeks at #1 on the Billboard rock charts in 1986.

There have been several dance and chill-out versions, it appeared on the soundtrack for the film, *On Dangerous Ground*, and a version by Hidden Citizens was recently used in Assassin's Creed (Syndicate) video game. It was also

memorably sampled by US rapper Killer Mike.

The new charity version strips the song back to its powerful essentials. It was recorded during an Edinburgh Fringe run at The Gilded Balloon in a solo show with just BA's singing to a piano accompaniment. The digital single is released with a "B side" – a "Nashville mix" which includes additional instrumentation.

BA Robertson said: "Steve told me how Lorri reacted to the song when she first heard it. She felt it had been written about the Ukraine conflict. I had forgotten about this performance so it was easy to say, 'Let's do it'."

The words of the song:

BA Robertson: Silent Running

(Robertson/Rutherford)

Take the children and yourself
And hide out in the cellar
By now the fighting will be close at hand
Don't believe the church and state
And everything they tell you
Believe in me, I'm with the high command

Chorus

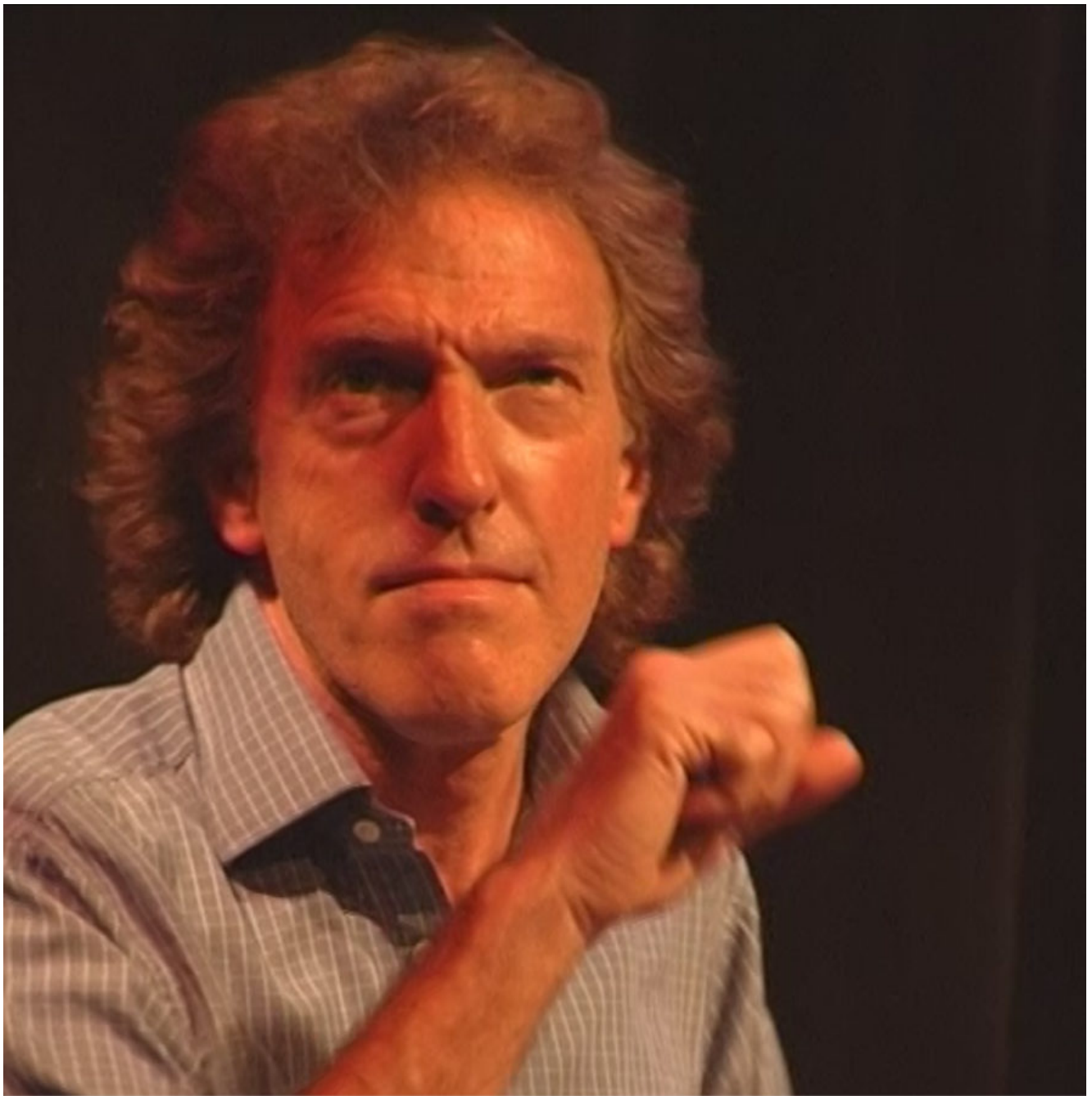
Can you hear me, can you hear me running?
Can you hear me running, can you hear me calling you?
Can you hear me, can you hear me running?
Can you hear me running, can you hear me calling you?

There's a gun and ammunition
Just inside the doorway
Use it only in emergency
Better you should pray to God
The Father and the Spirit
Will guide you and protect from up here

Chorus

Swear allegiance to the flag
Whatever flag they offer
Never hint at what you really feel
Teach the children quietly
For some day sons and daughters
Will rise up and fight while we stood still

Chorus x 2



BA Robertson

Multiple Grammy nominee, PRS, and BMI award winner, Scots born

composer, author, singer BA Robertson was educated at Allan Glen's School Glasgow, and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, where he studied piano, clarinet, harmony and counterpoint.

An almost 50 year, award winning career in the music business has produced 100 silver, gold, platinum, and multi-platinum selling records, awards nominations including several Grammy and Ivor Novello nominations and an Ivor Novello Award for Best Song for *The Living Years*.

As well as chart success in his own right, with 5 solo albums, he has written hit songs for many people including Cliff Richard and Mike and the Mechanics (including their first hit single *Silent Running* (aka *Can You Hear Me* and recently sampled by Killer Mike) – Billboard's #1 Rock Song of 1986 – and the worldwide #1, *The Living Years*).

A cultural polymath, he is a Hollywood producer, has written film scores, presented and written TV and radio shows, and written and performed theatre plays, as well as working with some of the best known names in the business including a long and productive relationship with Mike and the Mechanics and Burt Bacharach (with whom he has more writing credits