



The Music Room
Conversations about Music
With Zoë Beyers

Episode Two

(First broadcast 3 July 2020)

Matthew Sharp
Cellist, singer, actor & director

Programme Notes

Curious Collaborations

Matthew Sharp is on a quest: to reinvent what it means to be a performing artist; to break through the boundaries of form and tear down barriers between artists and audiences both on stage and on screen. This journey has seen him collaborate on several occasions with composer [Stephen Deazley](#) and writer [Martin Riley](#), amongst others, to create pieces that involve communities, entertain families and harness the combined power of words, theatre and music. To hear them talk about one of their collaborations, *Death's Cabaret*, click [here](#).



John Tavener

In this episode we hear several works by John Tavener, a unique and controversial figure in 20th and 21st century music, and a major influence in Matthew Sharp's musical life. Tavener's career as a composer began at the forefront of the avant-garde movement in the 1960s and 70s, and saw him increasingly turn away from complicated techniques and sophistication in a search for simplicity and essential truth in his own music. His goal - to

get to the essence of his music - led to harsh criticism in some circles, but undeniable success in others. His cello concerto, [The Protecting Veil](#), is notable for its cross-genre appeal and popularity. Tavener's sacred music is perhaps his best-known and most successful (*Lament for Jerusalem*, *Song for Athene* and his three *Requiem* masses are but a few examples). He had a particular affinity with vocal music; the sound of the cello sits very close to the human voice, and the combination is used with delicacy and great beauty in his *Akhmatova Songs* for soprano and cello. To read a brief article on the *Songs* and Tavener's fascination with the Russian-Soviet Modernist poet Anna Akhmatova, click [here](#).

Errollyn Wallen



Errollyn Wallen

Errollyn Wallen's exquisite Cello Concerto was written for Matthew Sharp in 2008 and dedicated to Matthew and his wife Fiona. Click [here](#) to hear Errollyn Wallen talk about this work and Matthew's recording of it. Wallen is a Belize-born British composer whose multifaceted output has garnered her an international reputation. She is as comfortable writing contemporary classical music as mainstream popular songs. Wallen is the first black woman to have a work (Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra) performed at the BBC Proms. She was awarded a CBE in 2020 for services to music. To read more, click [here](#).

Links to follow...

Visit www.matthewsharp.net for more information on Matthew Sharp and his diverse projects.

Click here for [Matthew's YouTube channel](#), containing more Tommy Foggo episodes, Hans Gál and Errollyn Wallen recordings.

Matthew mentions Taylor Swift and Schubert - both available and worth a watch on [ZRI's YouTube channel](#), as is the lovely [Röte Rosen](#) by Georges Boulanger.

Episode Playlist

- John Tavener: *Threnos* (Matthew Sharp, cello)
- Richard Wagner: *Die Walküre*, Act 1 (Matthew Sharp, *Hunding*; ESO/Woods)
- Edward Elgar: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85 (Matthew Sharp, cello)
- John Tavener: *Akhmatova Songs* (for soprano and cello): V. *The Muse* (Patricia Rozario, soprano; Steven Isserlis, cello)
- Maurice Ravel arr. David Johnstone: *Kaddisch* from *Deux Mélodies Hébraïques* (Matthew Sharp, cello & baritone)
- Hans Gál: Sonata for solo cello, Op. 109a: I. Andante - allegro comodo (Matthew Sharp, cello)
- Hans Gál: Suite for solo cello, Op. 109b: I. Introduzione e Fughetta. Grave - Allegro molto moderato (Matthew Sharp, cello)
- Astor Piazzolla arr. Matthew Sharp: *Libertango* (Matthew Sharp, cello)
- Django Reinhardt arr. ZRI: *Rhythm Futur* (ZRI)
- Errollyn Wallen: Cello Concerto (Matthew Sharp, cello; Orchestra X/Kok)
- John Tavener: *The Protecting Veil: I. The Protecting Veil* (Steven Isserlis, cello; LSO/Rozhdestvensky)