



JOHN TAVENER
The Protecting Veil
In Alium

Maria Kliegel
cello

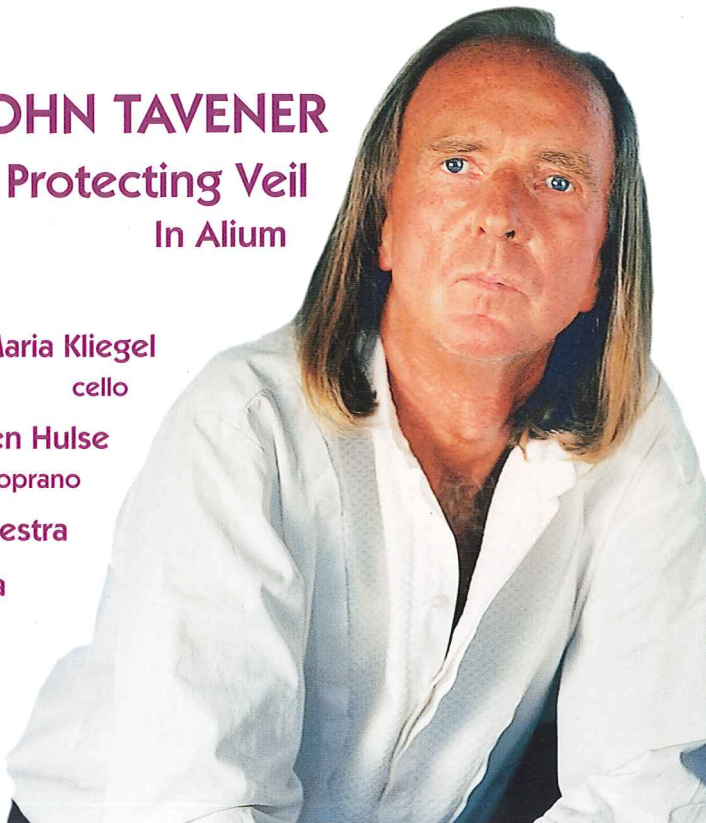
Eileen Hulse
soprano

Ulster Orchestra

Takuo Yuasa

DDD

8.554388



John Tavener (b. 1945): The Protecting Veil • In Alium

John Tavener studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Sir Lennox Berkeley and David Lumsdaine. In 1968 his dramatic cantata *The Whale* took its audience by storm and led to his music being recorded on The Beatles' Apple label. Since that time Tavener has continued to show an originality of concept and an intensely personal idiom, making his a voice quite separate from those of his contemporaries. Over the years, the contemplative side of his nature has led him in more spiritual directions and his commitment to the Russian Orthodox Church, which he joined in 1977, is now evident in all his work.

In Alium, scored for soprano solo, string orchestra, organ, Hammond organ, piano, percussion (gongs, tam-tams and bells) and four-track tape, was conceived especially for performance in the symmetrical surroundings of London's Royal Albert Hall, so that the attention of the listener is divided equally between the platform and the four loudspeakers, between the live and the recorded sounds. The work was stimulated by - and its ethos is reflected in the following lines from a poem by Charles Péguy, *La Porche de mystère de la deuxième Vertu*:

*L'Esperance est une petite fille de rien du tout,
Qui est venue au monde le jour de
Noël de l'année dernière.*

.....
*C'est elle, cette petite qui entraîne tout.
Car la foi ne voit que ce qui est.
Et elle elle voit ce qui sera.
La charité n'aime que ce qui est.
Et elle elle aime ce qui sera.*

(Hope is a little girl of no importance,
Who came into the world on Christmas Day
last year.
It is she, this little one who carries along all.
Because faith sees only what is.
And she sees what will be.
Charity loves only what is.
And she loves what will be.)

These words are sung in the first part of the work and, in conjunction with the Latin text *Spem in alium nunquam habui*, in the final section; the two central motets are settings of the words *Spem* and *In alium* respectively. The music is essentially 'soft and sugary' and the 'churchy' harmonies are used deliberately for their innate quality of sound and should not be regarded as being in inverted commas. In the first section, the strings (with gongs and tam-tams in rhythmic canon) support and harmonize the soprano's slow, wide-ranging melodic line, while the Hammond organ interjects laughter-like scatters of notes over a low-lying counterpoint and the piano 'improvises' a series of sporadic gestures, becoming ever more 'continuous and frenetic'. This texture is punctuated throughout by a section of recorded sounds: the noise of children playing, a flamboyant piano solo (the 'childhood' theme) and lastly a children's hymn, which, like the piano solo, arises from the closely-knit material which forms the basis of the work as a whole. Towards the end of the section, these three separate sounds are mixed and electronically distorted, until the soprano reaches the end of her solo. At this point, the recorded voice of the soprano (singing against herself in four parts) overlaps to mark the beginning of the second section.

This is a palindrome for soprano and piano, consisting of brief episodes separated by progressively longer - and then shorter - pauses, resolving at its central point on to the note A. From this moment, snatches of 'live' sounds - in which the soprano refers back to the 'childhood' theme, here accompanied by Hammond organ and strings - are irregularly overlaid on the second part of the palindrome, in which expressive 'noises' are substituted for the sung phrases of the first part.

After a long pause, section three begins, echoing around the hall like bells in four-part canon from the four speakers. Each 'bell' sound consists of a six-part chord, again produced by recorded super-positions of the single soprano voice.

The final section completes the palindromic effect

of the work as a whole by returning to the mood of the opening, but with the recorded soprano here replacing the string orchestra and the grand organ taking over from the Hammond organ, alternating its more and more spasmodic entries with those of the piano. The music unfolds as a canon in sixteen parts, each set of entries being introduced by bells and by glides on solo violins. Superimposed throughout are the voices of four small children saying their prayers (in Latin, French, German and English) and gradually and successively falling asleep. The canon dissolves into a thirty-two line slide (the soprano in sixteen parts with herself, together with sixteen solo violins) and the work ends as the last child falls asleep and the last of the thirty-two 'voices' resolves.

The Feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God was instituted in the Orthodox Church to commemorate her appearance in the Church at Vlacherni (Constantinople) in the early tenth century, possibly 902. At a time of grave danger for the Greeks from Saracen invasion, Andrew, the holy fool, together with his disciple Epiphanius, saw the Mother of God during an all-night vigil: she was standing high above them in the air, surrounded by a host of saints. She was praying earnestly and spreading out her Veil as a protective shelter over the Christians. Heartened by this vision, the Greeks withstood the Saracen assault and drove away the Saracen army. The Feast of the Protecting Veil is kept by the Orthodox Church in celebration of this event.

In *The Protecting Veil* Tavener strives to capture some of what he considers to be the almost cosmic power of the Mother of God. The cello represents the Mother of God and never stops singing throughout and one can think of the strings as a gigantic extension of her unending song. The music falls into eight continuous sections and use is made of the eight Byzantine tones. Various Feasts inspired Tavener as he composed; the second, for instance, is related to her birth, the third to the Annunciation, the fourth to the Incarnation, the fifth (unaccompanied) to her lament at the foot of the cross, the sixth to the Resurrection, the seventh to her Dormition, and the first and last sections to her cosmic beauty and power over a shattered world. *The Protecting Veil* ends with a musical evocation of the tears of the Mother of God.

It is, however, perfectly possible to listen to *The Protecting Veil* as 'pure' music but it may be helpful to know what was in Tavener's mind during the composition. It is an attempt to make a lyrical ikon in sound, rather than in wood, using the cellist as a brush. The music is highly stylised, geometrically formed and meditative in character.

The Protecting Veil was commissioned by the BBC for the 1989 Promenade Concerts. The first performance was given by Steven Isserlis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Oliver Knussen on 4th September 1989 at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Adapted from notes by John Tavener

Maria Kliegel

Maria Kliegel achieved significant success in 1981, when she was awarded the Grand Prix in the Rostropovich Competition in Paris. Born in the German town of Dillenburg, she began learning the cello when she was ten and first came to attention five years later, when, as a student at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, she twice won first prize in the *Jugend Musiziert* competition. She later studied in America with János Starker, serving as his assistant, and subsequently appeared in a phenomenal series of concerts in America, Switzerland and France, with Rostropovich as conductor. She has since then enjoyed an international career of considerable distinction as a soloist and recitalist, offering an amazingly wide repertoire, ranging from Bach and Vieuxtemps to the contemporary. Her many award-winning and acclaimed recordings include releases of the cello concertos of Shostakovich, the double concerto of Brahms and music by Sofia Gubaidulina, while her recording for Naxos of the concertos of Elgar and Dvořák with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Michael Halász quickly became a best-seller. Maria Kliegel plays a cello made by Stradivarius in 1693, previously the property of Maurice Gendron and made available to her by the Foundation for the Arts and Culture of North-Rhine-Westphalia, and has, since 1986, held master classes at the Cologne Conservatory.



Gunter Bock

Eileen Hulse

Eileen Hulse was born in London, and after an initial career as a teacher, she studied at the National Opera Studio and is now one of Britain's leading coloratura sopranos. Opera engagements have taken her to La Fenice in Venice, the Music Center in Los Angeles, Lucerne and Nantes in such varied repertoire as Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and Poulenc's *Le mamelles de Tirésias*. She appears frequently with major British orchestras and gives regular recitals in leading venues such as the Wigmore Hall, London and the Châtelet in Paris. She made her BBC 'Proms' début with Glière's *Concerto for coloratura soprano and orchestra*, and returned to give an acclaimed performance of John Tavener's *In Alium*. Eileen Hulse's recordings for a variety of labels include Satie's *Socrate*, Richard Strauss's *Brentano Lieder* and Michael Berkeley's opera *Baa, Baa Black Sheep*.



Gerald Place

Ulster Orchestra

Based in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the Ulster Orchestra was formed in 1966 and has established itself as one of the major symphony orchestras in the United Kingdom. The orchestra's varied activities include participation in the Belfast Festival at Queen's and the Belfast Proms, accompaniment to Opera Northern Ireland, educational work and concerts throughout Northern Ireland. The internationally acclaimed Dmitry Sitkovetsky is the orchestra's Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor and Takuo Yuasa is Principal Guest Conductor. The orchestra records and broadcasts extensively for the BBC and has acquired a high profile through its frequent television appearances. In January 1997 the orchestra gave the first public performance at Belfast's new major performance venue, the Waterfront Hall. This concert preceded the broadcast on network television of the orchestra's performance at the official opening concert together with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, in the presence of HRH the Prince of Wales. The Ulster Orchestra has made over fifty commercial recordings, several of which have received prestigious British awards. Successful tours of Europe, Asia and America have added to the growing international reputation of the orchestra, as have its regular appearances at the BBC Henry Wood Promenade Concerts.

Takuo Yuasa

The Japanese conductor Takuo Yuasa has become increasingly well known throughout the world. He has held positions as Principal Conductor of the Gumma Symphony Orchestra in Japan and Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Scottish Orchestra and is Principal Guest Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast. Born in Osaka, where he studied piano, cello, flute and clarinet as a child, he continued his education at the University of Cincinnati, going on to a study of conducting under Hans Swarowsky and Igor Markevich at the Vienna Musikhochschule and with Franco Ferrara in Siena. Since winning a Special Award at the Fitelberg International Competition in Katowice, Takuo Yuasa has regularly conducted the major orchestras there, while continuing his association with the principal orchestras in Japan. Recent engagements have brought appearances from Hong Kong to Trondheim, concerts with the London Philharmonic and Hallé Orchestras, with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and many others throughout Europe.



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ULSTER ORCHESTRA

The Ulster Orchestra was formed in 1966 and is based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It has toured in Europe, Asia and America, as well as regularly appearing throughout Britain and Ireland. The Principal Conductor of the orchestra is Dmitry Sitkovetsky and Takuo Yuasa is Principal Guest Conductor, while previous Principal Conductors have been Bryden Thomson, Vernon Handley, Yan Pascal Tortelier and En Shao.

Gallagher is one of the Ulster Orchestra's major funding bodies and has been its largest commercial sponsor since 1981. The company has sponsored a wide range of the orchestra's activities, including concerts, commercial recordings, community arts events and a tour of England and Wales. This long running support by Gallagher, one of the largest manufacturing industry employers in Northern Ireland, demonstrates the company's commitment to the cultural life of the Province.

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John

TAVENER

(b. 1945)

The Protecting Veil • In Alium

Maria Kliegel, Cello • Eileen Hulse, Soprano
Ulster Orchestra • Takuo Yuasa

DDD

Playing
Time
59:56

The Protecting Veil for cello and orchestra (45:18)

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | Section 1 | 15:07 |
| 2 | Annunciation | 3:20 |
| 3 | The Incarnation | 3:38 |
| 4 | Lament of the Mother of God at the Cross | 10:23 |
| 5 | Christ is risen! | 2:31 |
| 6 | The Dormition of the Mother of God | 7:10 |
| 7 | The Protecting Veil | 3:09 |

In Alium for soprano, tape and orchestra (14:36)

- | | | |
|----|-----------|------|
| 8 | Section A | 4:05 |
| 9 | Section B | 3:39 |
| 10 | Section C | 0:41 |
| 11 | Section D | 6:11 |

Recorded at the Ulster Hall, Belfast, Northern Ireland,
on 17th and 19th March, 1998.

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