

The album cover features a close-up portrait of a man, Matthew Barley, with his eyes closed and a serene expression. He is wearing a dark, possibly black, garment. A violin is positioned behind him, its body and f-hole visible, partially obscured by the man's face and the sheer fabric. The background is dark and textured, with vertical folds of a light-colored, translucent fabric that create a 'veil' effect over the man's face and the violin. The overall mood is contemplative and ethereal.

signum
CLASSICS

THE
PROTECTING
VEIL

SIR JOHN TAVENER

MATTHEW BARLEY

THE PROTECTING VEIL

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven | WB Yeats (1865-1939) | [0.38] |
| <i>Read by Olwyn Fouéré</i> | | |
| The Protecting Veil | | John Tavener (1944-2013) |
| 2. The Protecting Veil | | [46.11] |
| 3. The Nativity of the Mother of God | | [9.08] |
| 4. Annunciation | | [5.43] |
| 5. The Incarnation | | [3.23] |
| 6. The Lament of the Mother of God at the Cross | | [3.46] |
| 7. The Resurrection | | [10.44] |
| 8. The Dormition | | [2.42] |
| 9. The Protecting Veil | | [6.56] |
| <i>With Sinfonietta Rīga, directed from the cello by Matthew Barley</i> | | |
| 10. The Mother of God | WB Yeats | [3.49] |
| <i>Read by Olwyn Fouéré</i> | | |
| 11. Mother and Child | John Tavener, arr. Barley | [7.06] |
| <i>With Sinfonietta Rīga, directed from the cello by Matthew Barley</i> | | |
| 12. World Wheel XXVII: 'I heard the gypsy's violin play' | | |
| <i>Read by Julie Christie</i> | Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) | [1.00] |
| 13. The Song of Separation and Waiting | Pandit Sultan Khan (1940-2011) | [11.28] |
| <i>With Sukhvinder 'Pinky' Singh, tabla</i> | | |
| Total timings: | | [67.31] |

MATTHEW BARLEY Cello

www.signumrecords.com

“Transcendent With Awesome Majesty”.

John Tavener wrote these words above the opening cello notes of *The Protecting Veil*, immediately communicating the scale of what we are about to hear. The work is universal, timeless, structurally perfect and emotionally powerful and as such, in my opinion, ranks as one of the greatest cello concertos. It also brings out the foremost quality of the cello: its ability to sing. In the composer’s words “The cello represents The Mother of God and never stops singing”. And indeed, the cello sings without stopping for the entire 46 minutes of the piece, requiring huge mental and physical stamina.

Further emphasising the song-like nature of the piece, Tavener quotes two of his own songs – the *Hymn to the Mother of God* (track two) and the *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God* (track eight), and in fact the entire composition is in an extended song form. Seven of the eight movements are structured as a verse and chorus, each verse is new material, and the chorus is the peals of bells from the orchestra, answered by the solo cello, varied in each movement but clearly related – the first chorus comes just after seven minutes in track two.

And what is this great song about? *The Feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God* is the Orthodox Christian feast day that commemorates Mary’s appearance at the church of Vlacherni (Constantinople) in the 10th Century. According to legend, Mary appeared in a vision at night to Andrew the Holy Fool, and, surrounded by saints, extended her veil as a protective shelter for the Greeks, inspiring them to withstand an imminent Saracen invasion. This protective ‘almost cosmic power’ as Tavener put it, this unending love from the Mother of God, represented by the song of the cello (‘an icon in sound’) constitutes the bedrock of the work that is divided into eight clear sections. The first and last sections are both called ‘The Protecting Veil’, based around the note F, and the base of each subsequent section (titled after other orthodox feast days; see track listing), descends one note per section through a full scale. This slow-motion musical journey from one F down the scale to another happens in a way that echoes so many spiritual journeys – Hesse’s *Siddhartha* springs to mind – that come full circle to finish where they began, illuminated by experience and time.

The Protecting Veil has the power to move the listener as much by its lyrical beauty, as by its underpinning rigorous and formal structure. I have already outlined the overall structure of the piece, and in addition, Tavener uses a number of compositional devices

that are geometrical in nature, for instance where a series of notes repeats in reverse starting with the last note, like 123454321, which can happen over sequences of more than 100 notes – it's easy to just copy all the notes you have just written backwards, but to write ones that sound so beautiful when reversed takes great skill. Other techniques used are canon, augmentation, diminution, inversion, retrograde repetition and additive repetition. I will be posting a series of videos on my YouTube page (youtube.com/matthewbarleycello) to explain these terms and other aspects of the piece in detail, aimed both at those who understand the terms of classical music, and those who don't. Tavener's use of additive repetition is particularly interesting: at the end of the first section one of the most memorable passages of the piece occurs when the cello hangs on a high note and then gently swoops down more than an octave to an E, which is then the key of the subsequent movement. This passage repeats at the end of each movement, and each time one more note is added after the E, heralding the key of what is to follow eventually outlining the whole key structure of the piece: F-E-D-C-Bb-A-G-F.

In the end we should not be analysing all this technique as we listen – I love to see what makes things tick – we should be carried along by the compelling emotional narrative, much like in the music of Bach (I think Tavener's motives for writing music were very similar to Bach's), where the rigour and discipline of the composition allow the simple, deeply felt nature of the music to shine through. An example would be the fifth movement, 'The Lament of the Mother of God at the Cross'. There is nobody who can't be moved by imagining a mother kneeling beneath a cross on which her son is nailed – this deeply visceral image is so powerful and reaches beyond religion. After this extended solo passage in which the grief of the mother reaches a point where the mind becomes unhinged and sanity is threatened, the orchestra returns with a sound that I imagine is like the sound of nails piercing flesh – I can't think of many passages of music where, in concert, you can feel as though the audience have stopped breathing, almost suffocated by the intensity. And then the joyful release of the next movement is truly intoxicating, however you interpret the meaning of resurrection.

The universal quality of the piece – and I am here describing the way the piece can communicate itself to anyone regardless of age, culture or education – lies in the fact that singing and emotion belong to all humans, and it is these qualities that help to give the piece its emotional power. For me, even the fact that Tavener did not choose sonata form or anything overtly classical, but a song form, also adds to the unusually broad appeal of the piece – it has the power to reach beyond the classical world.

Feast days, scales and retrograde inversions are like the skin and clothes of the piece, but underneath these compositional effects lies a more profound element, which is Tavener's attention to what he called the Eternal Feminine. The focus here is Mary, the Mother of God – Theotokos – but it could be Shakti in Hindu, or the Earth Mother in an animistic culture – it is the universal and ancient idea of the power of the sacred feminine. Tavener's belief was that many of the problems faced by humanity today are caused by an imbalance of the masculine and feminine. To illustrate this theme further I invited two wonderful and venerable actresses to read poems that were favourites of Tavener's. Yeats' *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven* has a beautiful resonance with the veil of the title, *The Mother of God* speaks for itself, and the stanza by Schuon (that Tavener set to music in *Mother and Child*) resonated with India through the mention of the gypsies, who originally came to Europe from India.

I discovered the link between *The Protecting Veil* and India quite by accident. In the cello part there are many grace notes (small extra notes tucked in before the main one), and by the first is an asterisk pointing to a footnote that says they should be microtones as in 'the characteristic breaks in the voice of Byzantine chant'. It was years of thinking, occasional forays into Google and Wikipedia, and the picking of various brains before I had to admit that I really didn't know what that meant and couldn't find anyone who did, so eventually I called the composer just before a concert and asked what actually did it mean? I sung a couple of versions of how I could play it and he chose one, and I responded "Ah, you mean so it should sound a little like a slide in Indian classical music?"; he replied "Yes, exactly!" He went on to explain that he had been listening to a great deal of Indian music at the time of writing and it had influenced him greatly – and as this musical world has also had a big impact on my life, this was a eureka moment in learning the piece, opening all sorts of doors to new fingerings and ways of hearing certain passages. (After this realisation I was fortunate to spend an inspiring and formative day working on the piece with Tavener.)

Because of this Indian element to the music, I decided to include *The Song of Separation and Waiting* that I learned from its composer, Sultan Khan, in a hotel room in Brisbane just before we played a concert together. I've played the piece many times since, and my favourite version is always with tabla player Sukwinda Singh, who everyone knows affectionately as Pinky, a true master of rhythm and improvisation. This track and the solos on *Mother and Child* are single takes and unedited.

Mother and Child is a mysterious and touching choral work by Tavener, and I wanted to try conducting my own arrangement of it with some improvised responses on the cello. We only got to it in the last minutes of the recording session but I was so happy with the sound and phrasing from the strings of the Sinfonietta Riga – warm, resonant and with that distinctive eastern European colour that works so well for Tavener's Christianity of the east.

Matthew Barley, 2019



[1]

He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

[10]

The Mother of God

William Butler Yeats

The threefold terror of love; a fallen flare
Through the hollow of an ear;
Wings beating about the room;
The terror of all terrors that I bore
The Heavens in my womb.

Had I not found content among the shows
Every common woman knows,
Chimney corner, garden walk,
Or rocky cistern where we tread the clothes
And gather all the talk?

What is this flesh I purchased with my pains,
This fallen star my milk sustains,
This love that makes my heart's blood stop
Or strikes a Sudden chill into my bones
And bids my hair stand up?

[12]

Extract from World Wheel XXVII:

'I heard the gypsy's violin play'

Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998)

I heard the gypsy's violin play;
The melody
Was heavy with love; it sang as if
His heart would break in two.
In the human heart there is a kernel of pain,
And yet it is sweet;
We feel what the soul has lost:
Paradise.
Each grief in life bears witness to this
Unconsciously;
Yet see: the solace given by God
Lives deep in our breast.
Thus I wish, O gypsy, to be thankful to you –
I have learnt much
From all the beauty that came to me
Through your play.

Original German text by Frithjof Schuon
English translations by Catherine Schuon
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MATTHEW BARLEY

Cello playing is at the centre of Matthew Barley's career, while his musical world has virtually no geographical, social or stylistic boundaries.

Matthew Barley's passions include improvisation, education, multi-genre music-making, electronics, and pioneering community programmes. He is also a world-renowned cellist, who has performed in over 50 countries, including concertos with the BBC Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, London Sinfonietta, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Royal Scottish National, Swedish Chamber, Vienna Radio Symphony, Kremerata Baltica, Czech Philharmonic, Melbourne and New Zealand Symphonies and the Metropole Jazz Orchestra. With Viktoria Mullova he recently premiered and toured *At Swim-Two-Birds*, a double concerto by Pascal Dusapin, with the Nederlands Radio, RAI Torino, Seattle Symphony, London Philharmonic, Paris National and Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestras.

Matthew's collaborations include Matthias Goerne, the Labèque Sisters, Avi Avital, Manu Delago, Martin Frost, Shai Wosner, Calefax, Thomas Larcher, Amjad Ali Khan, Julian Joseph, Nitin Sawhney, and Jon Lord (Deep Purple), appearing in venues ranging from Ronnie Scott's and the WOMAD festivals to London's Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Vienna's Konzerthaus and Zürich's Tonhalle. Matthew's new music group, *Between The Notes*, has undertaken over 60 creative community projects with young people and orchestral players around the world.

Matthew has given premieres by Pascal Dusapin, Roxana Panufnik, James MacMillan, Thomas Larcher, Detlev Glanert, Dai Fujikura and many other prominent composers, including with prominent Indian musicians in a new project with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

He has recorded for Signum Classics and Black Box. In 2011 he released a CD for Onyx Classics with Viktoria Mullova on which he was cellist, arranger, composer and producer, *The Peasant Girl*, which has gained rave reviews worldwide, and is now also available on DVD. In 2013 Matthew undertook a 100-event UK tour celebrating Benjamin Britten – the tour was accompanied by a CD release, *Around Britten*, described by Sinfini as “a defining statement in modern cello playing”. Venues included concert halls, galleries, a prison, a lighthouse, a swimming pool and an ancient yew forest.

Matthew is married to Russian violinist Viktoria Mullova. They live in London, love to travel and share music and have three children. He plays a Cesare Gigli cello from Rome, c.1750

SINFONIETTA RĪGA

Violin

Antti Kortelainen
Liene Neija-Kalniņa
Kristiāna Širante
Madara Gaile
Līva Plociņa-Janova
Agnese Kanniņa
Ivars Brīnums
Anna Naudžūne
Baiba Biezā
Signe Šteimane
Kristiāna Ozoliņa
Indulis Cintiņš

Konstantīns Paturskis
Aleksandra Mališkina
Agnese Stalidzāne
Līva Tomiņa

Alto

Dāvis Sliecāns
Inese Jēkabsons
Ineta Abakuka
Silvija Krauze
Paula Kronentāle
Baiba Bergmane

Cello

Kārlis Klotiņš
Māra Botmane
Dārta Svētiņa
Nadežda Bardjuka
Kristers Mārtiņš Šimanis
Krišjānis Gaikis

Double Bass

Viktors Veljičko
Jānis Stafeckis
Viktors Stankevičs



Youthful ardour, joy of learning and discovery of new horizons are the traits that best describe the Grammy-winning State Chamber Orchestra Sinfonietta Rīga. Since its foundation in 2006, the orchestra's artistic director and chief conductor has been Normunds Šnē. Sinfonietta Rīga musicians are young, erudite and bursting with creativity. They are assiduous students of the musical heritage of the First and Second Viennese School and eager presenters of the musical phenomena and styles of the 20th century, while continuing to look for the brightest revelations in contemporary music scene. Among the ambitions of the orchestra is promotion and development of chamber symphony genre in Latvian music, therefore twice a year Sinfonietta Rīga commissions a new chamber symphony score to contemporary Latvian composers.

Sinfonietta Rīga often collaborates with guest conductors, and has staged thematically and stylistically varied programmes together with Paavo Järvi, Heinz Holliger, John Storgårds, Christoph Poppen, Olari Elts, Juha Kangas and Tõnu Kaljuste.

Sinfonietta Rīga is a frequent guest in festivals of various sizes in Latvia and abroad. In July 2016, led by maestro Paavo Järvi, the orchestra opened the 6th Pärnu Music Festival, and has visited the prominent Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm several times. In February 2017, together with Latvian Radio Choir, Sinfonietta Rīga had its debut at the Elbphilharmonie, performing a retrospective of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's works at the introvert art festival Lux Aeterna; in June 2018 both collectives came together to perform the same programme again, this time at the Kissingen Sommer festival in the spa town Bad Kissingen in Bavaria. To celebrate the centenary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia, in October 2018 Sinfonietta Rīga participated for the first time in the Cafe Budapest festival, and together with accordionist Ksenija Sidorova gave concerts in Malmö, Gothenburg and Örebro concert halls.

For its musical and cultural contribution Sinfonietta Rīga has received the coveted national seal of approval – the Grand Latvian Music Award – three times. Its participation in the recording of *Adam's Lament* by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, released by ECM, brought the orchestra the acclaimed Grammy Award. Sinfonietta Rīga has recorded ten other albums that have been released by its devoted partners Wergo, Ondine, Onyx, Edition Records, Challenge Records and Latvian national record label SKANI.

VALSTS KAMERORĶESTRIS
 Sinfo*n*i*e*tt*a*•Rīga



SUKHVINDER 'PINKY' SINGH

Sukhvinder 'Pinky' Singh is one of India's most dynamic percussionists. Hailing from the holy village of Sri Bhaini Sahib (Ludhiana, Punjab), Sukhvinder excelled from a young age, beginning his musical journey playing the Dholak and Jorhi in the Namdhari Sangeet tradition at the age of five. Aged thirteen, Sukhvinder gave his first major public performance and soon after left for Varanasi where he spent eighteen years in Seva (selfless service) and Riyaz (intense training practice in tabla). It was during this period that the great Pt. Kishan Maharaj gave him meticulous attention and tabla tutelage. Through his spontaneity, power, virtuosity and above all his inimitable ability to captivate his audiences, Sukhvinder has become one of the most sought-after accompanists, and has travelled extensively across India, Europe and the USA with leading artists such as Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Vilayat Khan and Ustad Amjad Ali Khan. He has received a Grammy award and performed with major orchestras including the BBC Philharmonic. His jorhi performances have led to a meteoric rise in respect and appreciation for the rare art of jorhi playing, and he is proclaimed to be the foremost exponent of the jorhi worldwide.



JULIE CHRISTIE

Renowned for a wide range of roles in English and American films of the 1960s and '70s, Julie Christie has been described as being one of "the most genuinely glamorous, and one of the most intelligent, of all British stars".

Born in India and educated in England and France, Christie studied acting at London's Central School for Drama before making her stage debut in 1957. Her first major film role was in director John Schlesinger's *Billy Liar* (1963). In 1965 she found stardom and won an Academy Award for playing a self-destructive fashion model in Schlesinger's *Darling*. That same year, she also appeared as the romantic heroine Lara in David Lean's enormously successful screen adaptation of Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. She played dual roles in director François Truffaut's production of Ray Bradbury's science-fiction novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) and portrayed the Thomas Hardy heroine Bathsheba in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1967), her final theatrical film with Schlesinger.

Comfortable in both contemporary and period pieces, Christie took roles in films led by a number of internationally respected directors; in Lester's *Petulia* (1968), she gave the defining performance of a 1960s free spirit, and in Altman's period western *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971), she won another Oscar nomination for her portrait of a tough, unflappable madam. In Roeg's disturbing psychological thriller *Don't Look Now* (1973) – a film that has become something of a cult classic – Christie turned in what was perhaps her most emotionally layered performance to date as a woman haunted by the deaths of her daughter and husband yet determined to maintain her poise and dignity.

In the 1990s, Christie returned to the filmgoing public's attention with her acclaimed portrayal of Gertrude in Kenneth Branagh's film version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1996). She received her third Academy Award nomination for her role as a world-weary retired screen actress in *Afterglow* (1997). Her subsequent films include *Troy* (2004), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), and *Finding Neverland* (2004). Christie received a best actress Oscar nomination for her role as a woman with Alzheimer disease who forgets about her husband and falls in love with another man in *Away from Her* (2006), based on a short story by Alice Munro. She later portrayed the grandmother in *Red Riding Hood* (2011), an adaptation of the well-known folktale, and an erstwhile radical political activist in Robert Redford's thriller *The Company You Keep* (2012).

OLWEN FOUÉRE

Olwen Fouéré is an actor and creative artist who works internationally in English and French.

Her productions include her adaptation and performance of the voice of the river in James Joyce's 'Finnegans Wake' - *riverrun* - which has toured internationally since 2013, her performances of **Lessness** by Samuel Beckett which premiered at the Barbican International Beckett Festival in 2015 and her translations and performances of *Sodome, my love* and *Danse, Morob* by the French writer Laurent Gaudé.

Recent stage work include Yael Farber's *Salomé* at the Royal National Theatre London and Enda Walsh's *Ballyturk* at St Ann's Warehouse New York.

Recent film includes *Mandy* by Panos Cosmatos, *Beast* by Michael Pearce, *The Survivalist* by Stephen Fingleton, and *The Crimes of Grindewald* for Warner Bros.

Her collaborations include *Tremble, Tremble* by Jesse Jones representing Ireland at the Venice Biennale 2017 and several performance projects with composer Roger Doyle and with visual artist James Coleman.

She has received numerous awards including the Herald Archangel Award of the Edinburgh Festivals in 2014, the Irish Times Special Tribute Award 2013 for her outstanding contribution to Irish Theatre and an Honorary Doctorate (Doctor of Philosophy-Honoris Causa) from Dublin City University for her contribution to the arts and culture in Ireland.



This recording is dedicated to my mother, Keren Barley, with boundless gratitude and love. The biggest thanks to Sir John Tavener for writing *The Protecting Veil*, and for being so generous with his time. And to Lady Tavener who has been so unstintingly ready with all sorts of help and information in recent months.

It was a pleasure and an honour to work with two extraordinary actresses – a deep bow to Julie Christie and Olwen Fouéré.

Thanks to Hugo Ticciati and O/Modernt for generously hosting *The Song of Separation* recording in Sweden.

Thanks to The Introvert Art Festival AD LUCEM and my dear friend Sandra Zandberga in Riga, without whom this recording could not have happened.

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And thanks to Normunds Sne, Sinfonietta Riga for wonderful playing and patience in the recording session – especially the basses, and to Nikita and the staff at the Anglican Church in Riga.

And finally, thanks to Duncan and Miranda for filming the sessions and providing the best company as I went through my process of recording – everyone needs good Neiburgs.

The Song of Separation and Waiting, recorded at Petruskyrkan, Stocksund, Sweden 19th August 2017

Produced and engineered by Thore Brinkman

The Protecting Veil and *Mother and Child* recorded at The Anglican Church, Riga, Latvia
2nd and 3rd July 2018

Produced, engineered and edited by Thore Brinkman at Take5 Music Production

Julie Christie recorded by Mike Hatch in London 26th September 2018

Olwen Fouéré recorded by Tom Mungall in London 4th November 2018

Poems edited by Tom Mungall

Mastered by Mike Hatch, Floating Earth, London, January 2019

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