

In 2003 he composed *The Veil of the Temple*, based on texts from a number of religions, intended for a seven-hour overnight performance. His own position of approaching other religious traditions with the utmost respect while knowing in which religious tradition he himself stands, sometimes seemed difficult for the UK press. The most remarkable of the works that excited powerful criticism from some branches of Christianity was *The Beautiful Names*, a meditation on the ninety-nine names of Allah including *The Merciful, The Dangerous and The Subtle*, a commission enabled by Prince Charles for performance in Westminster Cathedral.

#### AN ICON FOR OUR AGE

Tavener's works are cross-cultural and interdisciplinary. He challenged the traditional layout of musical events by his use of visual and spatial effects, bringing elements of theatre into the world of music. He illustrated how to deal with intense suffering and he felt deeply for the suffering of the world. He saw the need to transubstantiate suffering through music in an artistic culture which saw fit to represent the most shocking and violent aspects of our culture in a raw untransformed state. He stands as an icon for a view of artistic expression of a way of generating hope and transcendence. Our age owes him deep gratitude. The Centre celebrates this and wishes to bring together others who share this vision of music, spirituality and healing.

#### THE AIMS OF THE CENTRE

- To mount a festival of Sir John Tavener's music every three years in the Winchester area
- To explore the relationship between spirituality and music with particular reference to the great faiths
- To organise a conference on music and spirituality associated with the festival, leading to publications in this area
- To disseminate Sir John's own understanding of the relationship between music and spirituality

The Centre is working with the Tavener Foundation, Winchester Cathedral and Chester Music to achieve its aims. It is led by June Boyce-Tillman in association with Lady Tavener.

The Rev Dr June Boyce-Tillman MBE FRSA FHEA, Professor of Applied Music and Artistic Convenor for the Centre for the Arts as Wellbeing, University of Winchester, Extraordinary Professor at North-West University, South Africa.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINCHESTER



## THE TAVENER CENTRE FOR MUSIC AND SPIRITUALITY

*Words still dissolve into the  
inexpressible ...*

*And music, ever new,  
Constructs from tremulous stones*

*In waste spaces  
A sacred dwelling.*

*Excerpt from Rainer Maria Rilke from  
The Sonnets to Orpheus*

## THE TAVENER CENTRE FOR MUSIC AND SPIRITUALITY

In an age of searching for meaning, music is often a place where people find hope and inspiration. This Centre will be a place where the links between spirituality and music can be examined; those established by the great world faiths and those made by people in their everyday lives. The Centre will produce writing and creative projects in this area and will attract people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

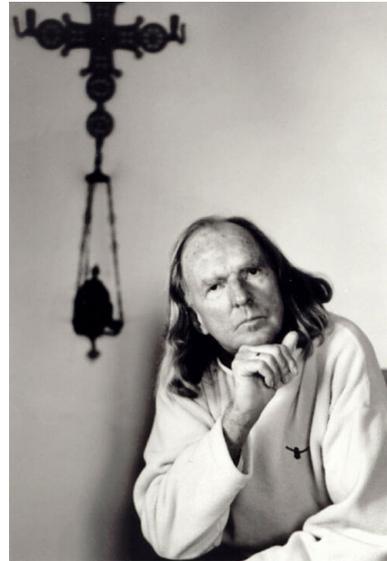
### SIR JOHN TAVENER

Sir John Tavener was born on 28 January 1944 in Wembley and first came to wide public attention in 1968, with an excitingly innovative work, *The Whale*, recorded on the Beatles' Apple label. Also released on Apple was his *Celtic Requiem*, performed at Winchester Cathedral in 1973. Tavener's beautiful setting of William Blake's

*The Lamb* was first performed at Winchester in 1982, and his *Song for Athene* accompanied the coffin of Diana, Princess of Wales as it was carried out of Westminster Abbey. Inspiration for his music came from what he would term the 'primordial tradition'; he became a spiritual guide for many listeners in the contemporary world. He composed over 300 works and was knighted for his services to music in 2000. He died on 12 November 2013 and had a full Orthodox funeral in Winchester Cathedral with music sung by the Winchester Cathedral choirs.

Sir John Tavener.

Photo by Richard Haughton



### CONNECTIONS WITH WINCHESTER

Sir John's creative connection with Winchester was forged when Martin Neary was Organist and Master of the Choristers at the cathedral. The relationship continued with David Hill and Andrew Lumsden. The University organised concerts in the Cathedral celebrating Sir John's music, and an interview in 2005 in the Theatre Royal, in which he talked honestly and openly about the interplay between his own faith and

his creativity. This led to further conversations and co-operation on a piece for Her Majesty the Queen for a service in St Paul's Cathedral. In 2007 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Winchester.

### MUSIC AND SPIRITUALITY

Sir John has given us a wonderful insight into interfaith dialogue. In 1997, he embraced the Orthodox faith where he was particularly drawn to its traditions and mysticism, studying and setting to music the writings of Church Fathers in pieces that are heavily influenced by Byzantine chant. He continued to draw on other traditions and went on to stand firmly for religious tolerance through his work. In the study at his house sits a huge American Indian powwow drum, a sitar, Tibetan horns, temple bowls and Sufi drums, indications of an engagement with many spiritual traditions.



Sir John at the piano



Professor Joy Carter DL Vice-Chancellor, Sir John Tavener, Dame Mary Fagan and The Rev Dr June Boyce-Tillman at The University of Winchester Honorary Graduation, 2007