

The Artists

Andrew Barney is a proud scouser with West African, Caribbean and Irish roots. He studied Languages and Music at The University of Leeds, Languages at La Universidad de Granada in Spain, and Jazz and Classical Music at L'Université de Montréal in Canada. Also a linguist, he speaks English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Slovak, Czech and Arabic. Upcoming shows include *Beauty and The Beast* at the Gladstone Theatre, Port Sunlight, 6 – 9 November linktr.ee/andrewbarney

Tayo Aluko worked as an architect in Liverpool for several years before switching to full-time writing and performing. He has since toured the world with two plays: *Call Mr. Robeson* and *Just An Ordinary Lawyer*. His latest, *Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown*, was premiered in May this year and is also slated for national and international touring, including to Unity Theatre Liverpool on 4 December. www.tayoalukoandfriends.com

Anna-Louise Loy is a Tenor and Bass trombonist born in Liverpool. She was a regular member of the Liverpool Brass Band and the Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, of which she was principal trombonist. She studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and worked for a time as a Learning Project Coordinator at the Liverpool Philharmonic. Anna is also self taught artist and portrait painter. annalouiseartist.com

Gaia Ghazaryan is a violinist and conductor from Armenia who began her musical journey at the age of seven. She has performed with various orchestras and ensembles internationally, earning multiple awards for her ensemble and duet performances. Now based in Liverpool, Gaia is the chief conductor and director of the Arts Bar Orchestra, a newly formed ensemble that seeks to address the lack of opportunities for classical musicians in Merseyside. The orchestra will next be playing a *Bridgerton Night* at the Arts Bar Baltic on October 30. [@gaiaghazaryanmusic](https://www.instagram.com/gaiaghazaryanmusic)

Tayo Aluko & Friends, Andrew Barney Music and Culture Liverpool Present



With special guests



St. George's Hall, Liverpool. Wednesday 23 Oct 2024

Andrew Barney and I met about a year ago at a concert featuring one of the Kanneh-Masons, that famous family of prodigies raised by a British-Antiguan father and Sierra-Leonean-Welsh mother. This family has done more than most in recent years to keep alive the name and music of Britain's most famous Black classical composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912).

It is no coincidence that Coleridge-Taylor features tonight, with one song and two violin pieces. He has been of interest to me as a singer for about three decades now, and as a writer, I finally premiered a play inspired by his life and music in May this year. *Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown* will be receiving its Liverpool premiere at the Unity Theatre on October 4.

The play is about much, much more than the composer – it's about his father's Sierra-Leonean origins in a country created from the spoils of the holocaust of Africans known as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and the repercussions of the processes which ended in a devastating war toward the end of the last century. As we know too well, the effects of all that history continue to be felt to this day, and *Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown* is an attempt to understand and teach that history. As a reviewer wrote, "*The sweetness and beauty of the songs provides a poignant contrast to the often bleak events they punctuate.*"

The activist in me turned an idea for a play that would showcase Coleridge-Taylor songs into an often-very-dark historical and political odyssey through the African Diaspora that ultimately ends with hope and a call to action. That same activist and optimist came up with this ambitious idea of finding words of activists in Liverpool to set to music.

Pastor Daniels Ekarte, the Nigerian who lived here between 1915 and his death in 1964, is the earliest featured here. When he first arrived, there would have been at most a handful of Black and African students at the university. Today there are hundreds, but curiously, it seems, none studying classical music. This may just be a coincidence, but it is certainly worthy of note. I had imagined a pair of students from there performing some duets tonight, but we are nonetheless fortunate and proud to be presenting two other young musicians, playing the music of Black composers, including Shirley J. Thompson, a former music student at the same University of Liverpool.

The words of politicians, war-mongers and white-supremacists give us the troubled world we live in today. The words of activists give us the will and encouragement to fight for peace and imagine a better world. Let music be the food of love and peace. Play on. Listen on. Act on.

Tayo Aluko. Liverpool, Wednesday October 23, 2024.

Programme

Tayo Aluko

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: *A Lovely Little Dream*

Words by Sarojini Naidu

Gaia Ghazaryan

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: "*Pastorale*" - Suite for Violin and Piano, Op.3

Andrew Barney

Andrew Barney: *Adrift; Home*

Anna-Louise Loy

Shirley J. Thompson: *MABUIKA! – A TAINO WELCOME*

(from Symphony Jamaica)

Tayo Aluko

Tayo Aluko: *We Don't Like History*

Words by Hakim Adi

Andrew Barney:

Redress for My Brethren

Words by Pastor Daniels Ekarte

Silent Statue

Words by Tayo Aluko

I Chose To Forgive

Words by Gee Walker

Anna-Louise Loy

Erroll Garner: *Misty*

Andrew Barney

R. Nathaniel Dett: Magnolias. (From Suite for Piano)

Gaia Ghazaryan

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: *Cavatina* (Suite for Violin and Piano, Op.3)

Tayo Aluko

Ayo Bankole: *Iya*

Paulette Vassell: *Come Julia.*

Words by William Roscoe