



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

(1875-1912)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor - British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was the first major classical composer of African descent. His father Daniel Peter Hughes (D.P.H.) Taylor was originally from Freetown, Sierra Leone and had been rescued from transport into American slavery by the British navy. Once in London, D.P.H. Taylor studied medicine, but later returned to Africa after his background apparently discouraged potential patients. It is unclear if D.P.H. knew about his son, Samuel as he left London before Alice Hare Martin gave birth.

As a young boy, Coleridge-Taylor devoted himself to the violin with voracity, as music was his outlet for coping with racial insults at school. In one horrible incident, his hair was set on fire. Through hard work and perseverance, at age 15, he entered the Royal College of Music in London. During his time at the Royal College, Coleridge-Taylor became interested in composition as well as violin performance. By the time he finished his studies in 1897, he was well on his way for being known as a composer. Edward Elgar, the lead British composer at the time, recommended Coleridge-Taylor's Ballade in A minor for orchestra for a presentation in the 1898 Three Choirs Festival, one of Britain's most prestigious venues. Samuel married fellow Royal College Music student, Jessie Walmisley in 1899 and the pair had two children: Hiawatha, born in 1900, and Gwendolyn, known as Avril, born in 1903. To support his family, Coleridge-Taylor took on a variety of high profile posts including principal conductor at the Handel Society of London, professor at Trinity College of Music, the Crystal Palace School of Art and Music, and the Guildhall School of Music. He died much too early from pneumonia at the age of 37.

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lG2OyyFPkbc>