

LOKI MUSIC PRESENTS

‘Orpheus Britannicus’

Henry Purcell and the English Imagination

A concert to commemorate the 150th anniversary
of the founding of the Purcell Society



John Clostermann (1660 - 1711), *Portrait of Henry Purcell*

Music by Henry Purcell, John Blow, Matthew Locke, William Croft and their
European contemporaries Johann Froberger and J.C.F. Fischer

Yeo Yat-Soon: Harpsichord and Clavichord

7.00 on Saturday 23 May 2026

Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare
Hampton on Thames
TW12 2EN

£14; £8 (under-18s, students, Temple volunteers) from:
<https://www.lokimusic.co.uk/calendar/item/59728030>





The Purcell Society was founded in 1876, at the height of the British Empire's global hegemony. It was a seminal moment for music scholarship in this country at a time when a German music critic notoriously described Britain as 'Das Land ohne Musik' ('the land without music'). The Society undertook to publish a definitive complete edition of Purcell's music using pioneering modern editorial techniques and academic research. Its work continues today, as it celebrates its 150th anniversary.

Prize winning harpsichordist and teacher Yeo Yat-Soon presents a concert to commemorate the anniversary of the Society in the historical setting of Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare. He will explore the rich repertoire of keyboard music of Restoration London, with music by Purcell himself, his teacher John Blow, and his older and younger contemporaries Matthew Locke and William Croft. He will also include music from continental northern Europe which was known in Britain by Johann Jacob Froberger and J.C.F. Fischer.

The programme illustrates the relationship between English composers of the Restoration and their continental counterparts. Whilst the European 'mainstream' was a major influence on Purcell and his contemporaries, there was also an attempt to create a quintessentially 'English' voice too. This reflects the complex political background of the time (and has interesting resonances today). In his short life, Purcell lived under four monarchs: Charles II, James II, William II and Mary II. Both Charles and James converted to Catholicism. James was overthrown in what was essentially a government sanctioned coup that we now know as the 'Glorious Revolution'. William was a Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic before he became Britain's only joint monarch with his wife Mary who was the daughter of James II. Purcell and Queen Mary were very close and died within a year of each other, both in their thirties.

Yeo Yat-Soon was born in London of Chinese parents. He studied at King's College London, from where he holds a Master's degree in Historical Musicology. He also pursued postgraduate studies in Harpsichord and Conducting at the Guildhall School of Music, where he won the Raymond Russell Prize for Harpsichord. He performs widely as a solo harpsichordist, specializing in presenting programmes in historic contexts, often performed in historical buildings. Regular venues include the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace, Handel House Museum and Strawberry Hill House in the UK, and Kammersaal Friedenau and the Instrument Museum in Berlin. Yat-Soon also specializes in baroque opera and has conducted for London Baroque Opera, City of London Festival and Opéra de Bauge, for whom he will conduct Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in the summer of 2026. He plays with the ensembles Follia, Bloomsbury Baroque and Camerata Berolinensis (Berlin). His project recreating meetings between Chinese and European musicians in the 17th and 18th centuries with the group **Divertissements Chinois**, received a prestigious grant from the Continuo Foundation. He has written an article on the subject for the British Library's *Discovering Music* online resource. Yat-Soon has broadcast for BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM and for BBC1, BBC4 and Channel 4 television. He has also had a long association with education, having been Director of Music at St Paul's Girls' School and The Lady Eleanor Holles School. He currently teaches harpsichord, coaches chamber music and lectures on Historical Performance Practice at the University of Birmingham. To follow Yat-Soon's latest updates please see: <http://www.yeoyat-soon.org>



Left: attrib. Peter Lely (1618 - 1680),
Portrait of John Blow



Right: Godfrey Kneller (1646 - 1723),
Portrait of Queen Mary II