



BISHOPSGATE  
INSTITUTE

# Lunchtime Concerts Kerry Yong

02 July 2021



Credit: Kerry Yong

## Introduction

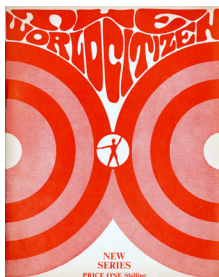
Our free Friday lunchtime concerts at Bishopsgate Institute are back. Join us as we welcome pianist extraordinaire Kerry Yong. Perhaps best known for his exquisite performances of contemporary music, he will today present us with something altogether more traditional.

Follow us on a journey through nine concerts taking in a range of musical genres, from the traditional to the unexpected. Over the course of the series, you will hear three groups of instruments - strings, percussion and electronics - presented and combined in different ways. Every week we ask our performers to respond to a theme suggested by the collections in our world famous Library and curate their programme around it.

"This programme represents a return for me. Although these are all new works to my repertoire, they are a return to performing the 'classical' music of my youth. Beethoven's sonatas have always been special to me – hearing them as a child led me to take up the piano and their inventiveness and distinctiveness piqued my interest in composition. My piano teacher during my teens introduced me to the world of baroque keyboard music and also to, the then somewhat underground movement of, historical performance practice and scholarship. Rather unfashionably, I am performing these celebrated French baroque pieces on a piano, as was more commonplace in recitals of a previous era where piano transcriptions of baroque music, such as those made by Dame Myra Hess, abounded."



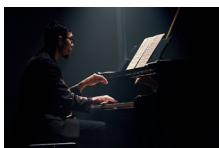
**Find out  
what inspired  
the artists**



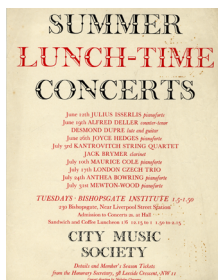
Mondocivitan Republic Archive



Mondocivitan Republic Archive



Credit: Kerry Yong



Bishopsgate Institute Archive

## Inspired by our archives

The twentieth-century historian Hugh Schonfield objected so strongly to military conflict that he set out to establish a new world order to destroy the barriers between nations, and remove the impetus for war. The Mondocivitan Republic was launched in the 1950s.

In the decades that followed, thousands of people from all over the world applied to become what Schonfield described as world citizens. World citizens possessed their own global passports. They developed a universal currency. They elected an international parliament to debate and promote their principles.

Today's concert explores Schonfield's concept of returning to a world without borders. It takes inspiration from the political ideals described in the Mondocivitan Republic Archive. If you'd like to discover more about these ideals, why not [visit our library](#) to explore the press cuttings, photographs, and newsletters that tell the world citizens' story?

## Meet the artist

Kerry is a musician who lives in east London. He trained as a pianist and now also performs on keyboards and live electronics.

Kerry has performed at Audiograft, Chisenhale Arts Club, K  mmer Klang, Rational Rec, Borealis Festival, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, ISCM World Music Days, Kings Place, City of London Festival, Music We'd Like To Hear, Nonclassical and in groups Apartment House, ELISION, Plus-Minus Ensemble and Ensemble Offspring.

Kerry studied piano with Stephanie McCallum at the University of Sydney, where he also studied composition, and at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He completed a doctorate at the Royal College of Music where he studied piano with Andrew Ball and researched performance practices of music for piano with electroacoustics. He has also dabbled with the other side, playing with bands Apolypoptics, Casiokids and Half-handed Cloud and the Welcome Wagon.

Kerry also directs music at Grace Church Hackney (which meets in Hoxton), where they are happy to use ancient chants, traditional hymns and new works with choirs, bands, electronics, objects and the like.

## History of the lunchtime concerts

Our concerts have been a tradition since the Second World War, when Dame Myra Hess instigated them at the National Gallery to bring people together at a time of hardship.

Lunchtime Concerts began at the Institute in 1948 and Dame Myra's Steinway piano now lives at the Institute and is often played at our concerts. This is our first summer season, building on the success of our regular autumn and spring programmes.

## Support our free concerts

Our lunchtime concerts have been a tradition since 1948, providing inspiration and respite from the world outside for an hour a week in a relaxed performance environment. We always pay our musicians for these performances, but the concerts are free to audiences.

Help support these concerts by donating [here](#).

# Programme

**Jacques Champion de Chambonnières** (1602-1672) Chaconne from Suite in F major, GusC 122

**Franz Liszt** (1811-1886) III: 'Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude' from Harmonies poétiques et religieuses from Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, S. 173

**Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) Les Adieux, Piano sonata No. 26 in E flat-major, Op 81a

I. Das Lebewohl (Les Adieux): Adagio – Allegro

II. Abwesenheit (L'Absence): Andante espressivo (In gehender Bewegung, doch mit viel Ausdruck)

III. Das Wiedersehen (Le Retour): Vivacissimamente (Im lebhaftesten Zeitmaße)

**François Couperin** (1668-1733) V. Les Barricades Mistérieuses from Ordre 6ème de clavecin (Bk 2)

"Upon being invited to give a recital at Bishopsgate Institute, the first work I thought of performing was Beethoven's Les Adieux sonata. The sonata captures the exuberance and joy of the return of something longed for, and has its own narrative captured in the titles of the three movements: 'Farewell', 'Absence', 'Return'. The work is dedicated to one of Beethoven's most faithful patrons, Archduke Rudolf of Austria, who fled Vienna for a year at Napoleon's attack on the city. This work felt timely as this concert will potentially feature the return of a live audience, which hasn't been possible for more than a year.

So, the idea of returning emerged as a theme for this programme. And while Beethoven's Les Adieux expresses something of the enthusiasm for a return of normality, the next piece explores the bliss of returning to solitude amidst the busyness of everyday life. Earlier this year, through the algorithmic taste-predictions of YouTube, I discovered a large work by Liszt that I hadn't heard before, the Harmonies poétiques et religieuses.

It instantly became a guilty pleasure. The third piece, Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude, has everything a lover of nineteenth-century repertoire could hope for: extended languid melodies with lush harmonies, religiosity, fervour and ecstasy, and imaginative piano writing, full of varied and intricate textures and layers. Most of all, it captures a particular romantic expression of religious and poetic feeling, which can be found in the quotation of [a poem by Alphonse de Lamartine](#), that Liszt uses as a preface to the work.

The other two short pieces that frame this programme demonstrate returning in a completely different way. Ostensibly products for the consumption of the French aristocracy, these baroque pieces, despite their refined and florid surfaces, are structured in a simple, common and ancient form – the ritornello or the rondeau. The alternation between episodes of new material, and a chorus or refrain, is the basis of much folk music and even today's pop, and finds itself in the two bookending works, Chambonnières' Chaconne and Couperin's peculiarly titled Les Barricades Mistérieuses, of which their most satisfying feature is their inevitable return to their opening refrain.

The theme of returning is implicit in the aims of the Mondcivitan Republic. Initially called 'The Commonwealth of World Citizens', and later renamed in its Esperanto form, the Mondcivitan Republic sought to bring peace internationally, on the premise that there is a fundamental unity of the human race and every endeavour should be made to return to this unity. Its members remained citizens to their own nations, but made pledges to be world citizens first, which would be expressed in their occupations, their everyday living and also through community meetings and action. They were expected to live by seven key principles: No-one is an Enemy; No-one is a Foreigner; Service to All, Complete Impartiality; Work for Peace; True Democracy; Equity and Justice.

230 Bishopsgate, London, EC2M 4QH

**[enquiries@bishopsgate.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bishopsgate.org.uk)**

The summer series of Lunchtime Concerts is supported by The City of London Corporation

