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# Purcell: A Biography

*Jonathan Keates*

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**Purcell: A Biography** Jonathan Keates
Henry Purcell (1659-1695) is the greatest of all English composers and a pivotal figure in European musical history. In this rich and colorful biography, Jonathan Keates deftly traces Purcell's life and artistry against the backdrop of the turbulent political, religious, theatrical, and social movements of his time. Purcell's musical genius both embraced and transcended the variable moods and tensions of Restoration England, and gave the period and the culture an unforgettable voice. With great skill and historical understanding, Keates follows Purcell through his extraordinarily prolific career, from chorister at the Chapel Royal, to composer for the theater and the court, to writer of sacred music, chamber music, and the triumphant Dido and Aeneas, the first British opera. Keates considers Purcell's musical studies with Pelham Humfrey and John Blow as well as his adaptation of Matthew Locke's innovative and colorful style. He provides a superb critical appreciation of Purcell's music in all its forms. Keates also discusses the musical history of the period, including the influence of French and Italian composers, whose music blended with and modified native traditions.

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