

## Yavor Genov: “Instrumental Music of the Renaissance. Studies on the Lute Repertoire”

Sofia, Institute of Art Studies, BAS, 2022. 136 p.  
(ISBN 978-619-7619-24-9)

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The lute is an instrument that, according to iconographic evidence, sounds “in angelic hands and heavenly choirs” as well as in secular companies and situations. In this way, the lute personifies the duality of human nature. This generalization is the basis for the author’s thesis that the lute is one of the bright symbols of the time and a field for experimentation at the end of the sixteenth century. The book is made up of six studies, four of which follow the functional principle of the lute repertoire: *abstract pieces* (Chapter Three), *arrangements of vocal music* (Chapters Four and Five), and *dance music* (Chapter Six). The preceding Chapter One and Chapter Two introduce the respective problematics by placing it, on the one hand, in the broad context of performance practices of the twentieth century, and on the other, in the information on the instrument’s design and tablature notation in the existing national varieties. In Chapter Three, through the lute repertoire one delves into the questions (attractive to many researchers) about the genres of *preamble/prelude*, *ricercar*, and *fantasia*, as well as their contrapuntal elegance. They lead to the great theme of the phenomena of *improvisation* and *composition*. The last (sixth) chapter is devoted to the dance genre. The study contains abundant information and could be useful and inspiring for any researcher or performer. Yavor Genov has done an extremely complex job of interpreting and synchronizing terminology that comes from various languages, schools, and periods. The following approaches have been applied: (1) He comes up with a Bulgarian equivalent uniting the various terminologies in the original sources being at the same time maximally informative for modern readers; (2) He always provides the text with the original term and precise specifications justifying the author’s choice. Chapter Four (Lute Intabulations in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. An attempt at Defining a Concept and Process) and Chapter Five, dedicated to *musica ficta* and its application in intabulations, have a particularly high value in historical-theoretical terms. The meaning-related shifts in musical thought during the Renaissance can be traced through the technological aspects of intabulation. In the search for a pathway towards old music, the author offers us his conception, which is: “Through the music of the past we find a language for self-expression, a field for developing and deploying our erudition, and a sphere for our own contextualization and constructing an environment of intellectual and spiritual residence.” These words spoken of music itself by the *concert lutenist Yavor Genov* seem to be equally valid for the book of the researcher Yavor Genov.

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