



The Instrumental Consort Repertory of the Late Fifteenth Century

Jon Banks

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Though individual pieces from the late fifteenth century are widely accepted as being written for instruments rather than voices, they are traditionally considered as exceptions within the context of a mainstream of vocal polyphony. After a rigorous examination of the criteria by which music of this period may be judged to be instrumental, Dr Jon Banks isolates all such pieces and establishes them as an explicit genre alongside the more commonly recognized vocal forms of the period. The distribution of these pieces in the manuscript and early printed sources of the time demonstrate how central instrumental consorts were to musical experience in Italy at this time. Banks also explores the social background to Italian music-making, and particularly the changing status of instrumentalists with respect to other musicians. Convincing evidence is put forward in particular for the lute ensemble to be a likely performance context for many of the surviving sources. The book is not intended to be a prescriptive account for the role of instruments in late medieval music, but instead restores an impressive but largely overlooked consort repertory to its rightful place in the history of music.



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