



Mel Bay Renaissance Solos for Mandolin

John Holenko

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Most of the music in this book comes from editions or manuscripts from England in the late 1500's. There are also a few French pieces. The cittern was popular in Italy, England and France. Aside from various tunings, there were two main kinds of instruments being played during the 16th and 17th centuries: the 4 course (four sets of doubled strings), and the 6 course cittern with several editions of music to go along with both. The pieces I have chosen for this book were all written for the 4 course instrument and fall into three main categories: dance music, song arrangements and free pieces. The free pieces are basically preludes that explore the melodic range of the instrument. As the title suggests these pieces can be played very freely and need not have a very strict tempo. The dance pieces are not really meant to be danced to, but rather take their form and rhythm from the popular court dances of the time. These can be played with a wide range of overall tempo, but once a tempo is chosen, should be strictly adhered to. The song arrangements are settings of popular songs of the time as well as more formal vocal settings. Care should be taken in making the melody clear and singing. Since the range of the cittern and mandolin are the same, John Holenko has kept the melodies intact. Because of the difference in tuning however, the voicing of the harmonies have been changed so as to fit on the mandolin.

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