



Music from the Age of Shakespeare: A Cultural History

Suzanne Lord



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This book introduces every important aspect of the Elizabethan music world. In ten scrupulously researched yet accessible chapters, Lord examines the lives of composers, the evolution of musical instruments, the Elizabethan system of musical notation, and the many textures and traditions of Elizabethan music. Biographical entries introduce the most significant and prolific composers as well as the members of royal society who influenced Elizabethan musical culture. Both familiar and obscure instruments of the era are described with focus on their musical and social contexts. Various types of music are defined and illustrated, along with an explanation of the musical notation used during this era. Chapter bibliographies, glossaries, and an index provide additional tools for both the novice and the experienced student of music and music history.

When Elizabeth ascended to the throne in 1558, England was undergoing tremendous upheaval. Power struggles between Protestants and Catholics shaped the English music world as musicians' livelihoods were directly linked to their religious allegiances. Music became a form of strategy within court politics, and secular music evolved through the musical and poetic influences of the Italian Renaissance. Events of the day were told and retold through music, class and social differences were sung with relish, and rituals of love and life were set to story and song. When England defeated the vaunted Spanish Armada in 1588, a victorious nation expressed its jubilance through music.



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