

Georg's Little Music Library

Recercare

Francesco Spinacino

Printed by Ottaviano Petrucci 1507



Arranged for Guitar / Lute

*From the first music
publication in history*

*handwritten
compositions & arrangements
by Georg Mertens*

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Francesco Spinacino (1485- ?) "Recercare"

What kind of music made it to be published first in the entire history of printed music?

If you are a guitarist you may have witnessed a guitar concert where a guitarist plays a very difficult piece and everyone admires him or her for getting all the stretches, speed and changes. For an outsider the first question would be: how interesting and beautiful is the music? But not so for the insider, and nothing seems to have changes for 500 years!

The first series of pieces published like here the Recercare is musically not very interesting. But like today with instrument insider difficult compositions, this score makes things technically hard by purpose without musical gain, just to show off and of course exercise the learner or player to conquer difficult passages.

In a time where Olympic Games didn't exist, and competition in sporty kills could end up deadly for the looser, of course there was also a peaceful platform to compete in skills, and here it is the skill on the lute. -

The score shows that at the time of this early print, the writer relied already on an established tradition in the way of writing the technical execution and proves that there was even a market for it.

Here some examples of what I would call "technique before music": Already in bar/measure 1 going from the open f# string with the thumb to the e on the D string with the index finger is just purposefully awkward.

Later in bar 21 the big stretch can be shown off and in bar 25 playing up high in the position to the lowest string!

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Recercare

Francesco Spinacino (1485-15??)

The original Tablature

Please note, that this TAB is "upside down" meaning the lowest sounding string is the top line and the highest sounding string is the bottom line.

If you are a guitar teacher you might have experienced that beginners sometimes assume that the low E string string, physically situated as the highest string is also written as the highest string.

The consistency that sound dominates location is a later general agreement and some composers up to 1700 wrote TAB's with the lowest sounding string as the top line.

The dots underneath a number (note) indicate it is played with a finger - index if only one note - the absence of a dot means it is played with the thumb.

The original shows the rhythm only by the start of the sequence of notes, but not how long they last - or have to be held down.

One of the few rules though was, that a finger needs to be held down for as long as possible or until it doesn't sound well any more.

The image shows a page of original lute tablature for the piece "Recercare" by Francesco Spinacino. The notation is written on six-line staves, with the lowest string at the top. The piece is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 13, 18, and 22 marked. The tablature includes various rhythmic patterns and fingerings indicated by dots and numbers.

Recercare

Transcription in Notes

3rd string is F# (instead of G)

③ = F#

Handwritten musical score for 'Recercare' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of seven systems of two staves each. It includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and fingerings. Circled numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6 are placed throughout the score, corresponding to the circled '3 = F#' at the top left. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a sharp sign on the final chord.

Georg's Little Music Library - here a selection

Cello solo - (1-10 indication of difficulty)

- G. Mertens - 5 Preludes for the Love of the Lower Strings [4-7]*
- G. Mertens - Variations on Sakura, Sakura [6-7]*
- J. Dowland - Melancholy Galliard [7]*
- V. Sojo - Cantico from 5 Pieces from Venezuela [7]*
- J. Massenet - Meditation [8]*
- G. Mertens - Variations on Maienzeit [8]*
- G. Mertens - Blue Mountains Rainforest Sonata [8-9]*
- M. Marais-Mertens: Variations on La Folia [9]*
- G. Mertens - Jenolan Cathedral Ciaconna [9]*
- G. Mertens - Spanish Romance [9]*
- G. Mertens - Cadenza to Haydn Cello Concerto C major 1st mov. [9]*
- I. Albeniz - Asturias [9]*
- G. Mertens - Tango Celloguitar [10]*

2 Cellos

- J.S.Bach - 8 Chorals [1-4]*
- Traditional Shakers - Simple Gifts [3]*
- F. Cutting 1580 - Greensleeves Variations [3]*
- 8 Beautiful Renaissance Dances [3-7]*
- E. Satie - Gymnopedie 1 (1 or 2 cellos) * [4]*
- J.S.Bach - Lute Suite No 1 ([5-8]*
- Saint-Saens The Swan with Bach Prelude I [6]*
- G. Sanz - Pavanas & Canarios [7]*
- M. Giuliani - Variations on La Folia [7-8]*
- E. Granados - Intermezzo from Goyescas [8-9]*

Cello & Guitar

- G.F. Handel - Aria "Lascia Ch'io Pianga (2 cellos / cello & guitar) [4]*
- D. Scarlatti - Sonata K32 (cello or shakuhachi & guitar/cello) [4]*
- L.v. Beethoven - Sonatina (cello & guitar or 2 guitars) [5]*
- A. Vivaldi - Sonata no 5 E minor [5-6]*
- J.S.Bach - Arioso (cellos & guitar, 2nd cello) [5-6]*
- G. Caccini - Ave Maria [5-6]*
- The 3 cello pieces from the Royal Wedding [6-7]*
- N. Paganini - Cantabile [8]*

Violin & Guitar

- El Condor Pasa - cello (or violin / flute) & guitar [5]*
- La Cumparsita - (violin or cello & guitar) [5-6]*
- The Old Gypsy - (violin or cello & guitar) # [5-6]*

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