



# Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others

*Gary Tomlinson*

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Magic enjoyed a vigorous revival in sixteenth-century Europe, attaining a prestige lost for over a millennium and becoming, for some, a kind of universal philosophy. Renaissance music also suggested a form of universal knowledge through renewed interest in two ancient themes: the Pythagorean and Platonic "harmony of the celestial spheres" and the legendary effects of the music of bards like Orpheus, Arion, and David. In this climate, Renaissance philosophers drew many new and provocative connections between music and the occult sciences.

In *Music in Renaissance Magic*, Gary Tomlinson describes some of these connections and offers a fresh view of the development of early modern thought in Italy. Raising issues essential to postmodern historiography—issues of cultural distance and our relationship to the others who inhabit our constructions of the past—Tomlinson provides a rich store of ideas for students of early modern culture, for musicologists, and for historians of philosophy, science, and religion.

"A scholarly step toward a goal that many composers have aimed for: to rescue the *idea* of New Age Music—that music can promote spiritual well-being—from the New Ageists who have reduced it to a level of sonic wallpaper."—Kyle Gann, *Village Voice*

"An exemplary piece of musical and intellectual history, of interest to all students of the Renaissance as well as musicologists. . . . The author deserves congratulations for introducing this new approach to the study of Renaissance music."—Peter Burke, *NOTES*

"Gary Tomlinson's *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others* examines the 'otherness' of magical cosmology. . . . [A] passionate, eloquently melancholy, and important book."—Anne Lake Prescott, *Studies in English Literature*



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