

Gilbert Isbin - Easy Lute Pieces, ISBN 9781795412650

The Belgian composer, guitarist and lutenist, Gilbert Isbin, is one of the most productive composers of new lute music.

This versatile artist has published numerous interesting compositions, e.g. '7 Old Flemish Songs' for solo lute, '5 Songs for Lute' (reviewed in Lauteninfo 2-3 / 2018), new art songs based on poems by well-known poets (e.g. Shakespeare), arrangements for the lute of pieces by the singer-songwriter Nick Drake, as well as the book "The Improvising Lutenist" (see review by Markus Lutz in the Lauteninfo, which should encourage lutenists to play improvised music).

In addition, some of his lute pieces have been impressively recorded on CD by Stathis Skandalidis and are featured on various YouTube videos performed by Stuart Walsh and Stathis Kandalidis. Isbin continues to perform as an improvising musician and he also publishes new guitar compositions.

Now Isbin has published an attractive new work, 'Easy Lute Pieces Vol. 1'. It is a collection of sixteen catchy tunes written for children and adults, which are very melodic, and above all really easy to learn and play.

Listening to the modern lute compositions of Gilbert Isbin, which can be heard in the many YouTube videos, one thing always emerges; they are, perhaps, comparable to little paintings, often almost with impressionistic moods and, of course, with a modern flavour.

Sometimes you can think of small film sequences that would fit well with the music (some of the YouTube videos with music by Isbin already do that very well). Once again, Isbin succeeds in capturing different areas of life and experiences in his compositions.

The book begins with a romantic piece, 'The Moon in your Eyes' (to be performed 'gently') which is reminiscent of a little jazz ballad of bygone times. The book leads us through an 'Idyllic Landscape' to the 'Beautiful Soul', possibly about an admired one or loved one.

A small, contemplative, slower-paced (score = 80) 'Nocturne' leads to the more lively 'Heaven Knows', which sounds a bit like a repetitive 'litany' that is "exposed" these days – perhaps the monotony of a daily routine or any stupid accident is reflected into sounds? But the motto, 'Heaven Knows', probably applies.

One of my favourite pieces in the new volume is 'Let the Happiness in', a very lively, true to the title, piece with a 'catchy character'. This is true for a number of the little character pieces. Similarly bright sounds 'In the Brightness of the Day', which according to Isbin should be 'happily'

executed. And if you want to end the day quietly after doing 'lute work', you are welcome to do so with the song 'In the Cool of the Evening', and let the soothing coolness of the dawn fall on you (Tempo quarter notes = 60).

It should be emphasised at this point, above all, that the pieces do not ask any great technical demands on young and older lute players! So the works should be easily playable even for beginners of the lute. The only prerequisite is the willingness to engage with these 'modern' sounds and to empathize with the 'tonal miniatures'. Anyone who succeeds will be rewarded extensively and amply by this book.

In the meantime the composer is already working on "Easy Lute Pieces Vol.2" edition.

You can buy the work on Amazon <https://amzn.to/2Dtn5Wm>