



Minstrels Playing: Music in Early English Religious Drama II (Vol 2)

Richard Rastall

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Richard Rastall's two books on music in early English religious drama complement each other. *Heaven Singing* provides an overview of the evidence for music in the plays, and defines the place, nature and cultural contexts of music in the drama; *Minstrels Playing* is a discussion of the evidence for every play in that repertory, and is therefore concerned with the place and nature of musical performance in each play individually. Following his general discussion of music in the anonymous religious plays of 15th- and 16th-century England in *The Heaven Singing* (1996), this companion volume turns to the individual biblical, saint and moral plays. Richard Rastall places each in its intellectual and cultural context, and notes the surviving evidence for music and other aural effects in the dramatic directions, text references, use of Latin and the liturgy, and the existing documentary records. At the end of each chapter a cue-list shows where the music should appear and presents the arguments for specific repertory and performance modes, providing an invaluable aid for directors. This leads on to a section on modern performance, in which Dr Rastall discusses a wide range of issues that impinge on the practicalities of providing music in early English drama and raise problems and queries for producers and musical directors: the type of staging and the nature of the set, the choice of cast, the choice of musical items, the training and rehearsing of singers, and much else.

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