

Richard Rastall. *Minstrels Playing. Music in Early English Religious Drama II*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001. Pp xxi, 549. Tables.

The companion volume to *The Heaven Singing. Music in Early English Religious Drama I* (1996), this second study continues Dr. Richard Rastall's analysis of music and its use in late medieval plays under the generic titles of Historical Drama (comprising biblical, saint, and miracle plays) and Fictional Drama, or moralities (excluding interludes). A final section titled 'Aspects of Modern Performance' deals with what the author sees as the 'ultimate aim of [his] work: to enable an appropriate use of music in performances of these plays' (xiii).

The presentation of each section is systematic: general introductory remarks on the plays, their manuscripts and history; tabulated stage directions; textual references; Latin and liturgical references; documentary evidence where extant; musical cues. Such an articulated method, with its numbering system, divisions and sub-divisions, leads to a dense system of internal cross referencing. The reader should also have volume 1 to hand because of the frequent and necessary references to material discussed only there. The approach is not exactly play-by-play, as the author suggests, but rather topic-by-topic, a rigid, schematic procedure that works least well with the biblical cycles, where any one play is never really considered in its totality. Take, for instance, the York Assumption, one of only three plays in the extant biblical cycles to include notated songs in the manuscripts. To gain an understanding of this play and its music requires the reader to piece together information from the index entry, from six sections in this volume, where one cross-reference seems incorrect, and from at least three different discussions in volume 1. The exercise, not one for the faint-hearted, does in the end provide excellent material, but Dr. Rastall's own valuable overview would have been extremely welcome.

Another difficulty of the method used here has to do with the inclusiveness of the categories. As one example, all Latin in a text, whether word, phrase, or sentence, is listed and discussed under the heading 'Latin and the liturgy' even when absolutely no reason exists, as Dr. Rastall conscientiously notes, to associate its presence with music. On the other hand, if Latin is used in a stage direction that does not imply or specify music, its text is not given at all. It could be argued that Latin stage directions function as importantly as do mere textual tags, as in *N-Town* where they could be seen as a sort of paratext, and hence should be included.

The summaries of previous scholarship on the history, composition, and performance of the plays discussed here are thorough and accurate. Dr. Rastall sets out conflicting views and matters of scholarly debate judicially but does not hesitate to draw his own conclusions from the evidence he provides. There may be a regrettable tendency to anachronism (see, for example, the parallel drawn between P.G. Wodehouse and the Norwich dramatist in their use of Latin tags) and to drift from cautious suggestion to assertion (the tentative 'may be' becomes 'is' in the space of five pages during the discussion of a stage direction in the Norwich play), but Dr. Rastall's concern for comprehensiveness in the scope of and approach to his project could indeed lead to such lapses.

The two volumes of this monumental work are a noteworthy achievement, broaching and solving historical, theoretical and practical problems in the fields of early drama and music.

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Alan Shepard. *Marlowe's Soldiers: Rhetorics of Masculinity in the Age of the Armada*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. Pp viii, 248.

One characteristic of societies at war is a heightening of conflict among those who advocate restricting liberties in the name of national security and those who resist the repression of dissidence imposed by militaristic agendas. In this original and compelling study of Christopher Marlowe's plays, Alan Shepard argues that just such a conflict took place in England following the failed Spanish Armada invasion of 1588. As the privy council invoked martial law for certain crimes and national security became a topic of popular discussion, writers of stage plays, pamphlets, poems, and military handbooks espoused the benefits of a militarized society. Positioning Marlowe within this public discourse, Shepard aims to understand how his plays 'make entertainment of a wealth of historically and geopolitically divergent fantasies about martial law and its discontents' (2).

To varying degrees, all of Marlowe's plays, Shepard argues, question the overt promotion of martial law and warfare circulating in the culture, particularly during those 'heteroglossic moments' (3) when minor civilian characters resist the masculinist rhetoric spouted by military leaders. Whereas pro-mili-