Playful pleasure or devout piety? Why did Florentines invest so much effort in the performance of sacre rappresentazioni, their dramatizations of the life of Christ and the saints, the history of Man’s Salvation from the Creation to the Last Judgement, Old and New Testament stories, and miracles of the Virgin? Drawing on manuscript and printed plays, confraternal and communal archives, chronicles and letters, this study explores in fine detail and with careful attention to chronology the performance groups and their motives, and the financing, staging, and reception of their plays. Woven into this exploration is an account of the transmission of the plays first in manuscript and later in print, with woodcuts that have guaranteed their survival to the present day.

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“This volume is the summa studiorum of Italian sacred theatre. Newbigin has assembled a vast array of sources (archival, textual, and iconographic) that allow the reader to appreciate the beauty and complexity of the sacre rappresentazioni of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Florence.”
-Gianni Cicali, Georgetown University

“Making a Play for God is an innovative study that offers the most comprehensive treatment of all the known Florentine mystery and miracle plays and playwrights, the performances, and their reception and editorial history. The research is impeccable, much is new, and it is a pleasure to read. The author’s knowledge of the field is unmatched, her accomplishment unrivaled.”
-Elissa Weaver, University of Chicago

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