

American musicals such as *Oklahoma!* (1967) and *West Side Story* (1968) as well as manipulative adaptations of European hit musicals such as Austrian *Elisabeth* and French *Romeo et Juliette*. As a result, the Hibiya district re-emerged as a hub for new musical entertainment after the second half of the 1950s. In 1963, Nissei Theatre opened with Japan's first hosting of a grand opera company, Deutsche Oper Berlin, followed by an increasing number of foreign musical theatres, which in turn affected domestic productions. In the field of traditional theatre, the kabuki actor Ichikawa Ennosuke III (1939–) reinvented kabuki as a new type of musical theatre with a faster, western-style pace known as *super-kabuki*, which is carried on by his successors.

Now, the musical has achieved full recognition in Japan. People use the English word *myūjīkaru* in a broad sense to mean music theatre in general. There are an increasing number of other companies representing Japanese musical scenes. Transcultural or mixed-media productions are increasing in the twentieth-first century. An independent musical company, Gekidan Shiki (Four Seasons Theatre Company, est. 1953), specializes in direct adaptations of Broadway and West End musicals such as *Phantom of the Opera*, *Lion King*, and *Wicked* while regularly staging original productions. On a smaller scale, there are a number of innovative musical companies, including Ongakuza Musical Company (est. 1977) and Myūjīkaru-za (est. 1995). Representative original works by the former include *Ai tabu Bottchan* (I Love Bottchan), which is based on the classical novel *Bottchan* by Soseki Natsume. Well-known works by the latter include *Swing Jazz*, a story of jazz players during the Second World War. More unique to the field, yet with a considerable fan base, is *Muscle Musical* (2001–11), which made acrobatic shows using its performers' athletic talents; it also performed several times in Las Vegas. However, Gekidan Shinkansen is another popular company, which produces original rock musicals in innovative kabuki style.

A recent phenomenon worth noting is the musicals based on *manga* (Japanese comics), *anime* (Japanese animation) or computer games. They are those cultural media that have gained considerable international fandom. To name a few successful examples, Takarazuka adopted the popular manga by Riyoko Ikeda (1947–), *Berusaïyu-no-bara* (The Rose of Versailles), in 1974 and has frequently restaged it. It has also adapted *Black Jack* (1994 and 2012) and *Phoenix* (1994) by Osamu Tezuka (1928–89). In the new millennium, a new sport manga *Teni-myū* (Tennis no Ojisama: The Prince of Tennis Musical) by Takeshi Konomi (1970–) has turned into an all-male musical series since 2003 and is still gaining tremendous popularity. Another hit manga-based musical, *Kuroshitsuji* (Black Butler), based on the internationally popular Gothic comic by Yana Toboso (1984–), has been continuing since 2010. As media technology develops, video games are becoming a common source for the contemporary Japanese musical scene. Again, all-female Takarazuka took the initiative to stage the popular games *Gyakuten-saiban* (Phoenix Right, 2009, 2013) and *Sengoku Basara* (Devil Kings, 2013) by adding adequate singing and dancing. By adapting manga and video games for the stage, these experiments with mixed media in subject matters and techniques have resulted in increasing audience numbers, expanding not only the diversity of Japanese musical theatre but also the horizon of musical goers.

It can be said that new Japanese musicals are strongly being inspired by young popular cultures. In the Japanese theatre scene today, therefore, *myūjīkaru* represents a hybrid genre. Throughout the past century, reception and consumption of western music theatres such as opera, operettas, revues and shows have stimulated Japanese music theatre conventions, resulting in complex yet dynamic productions.

II. China, by Sissi Liu

'Musical theatre' (*yinyueju*) as an imported term has been unstable and much contested throughout the history of its development as a theatrical genre in China. Along with *yinyueju*, *gewuju*

(song and dance theatre), *yueju* (music drama) and *qinggeju* (light opera) have all been used to describe a similar concept. In the first complete Chinese musical theatre history published in 2012 – *Zhongguo yinyue jushi, jindai juan* (A History of Chinese Musicals, Modern Volume) by Wen Shuo – the term is used loosely to include most, if not all, performance genres that encompass music/singing, including *xiqu* (traditional Chinese theatre), *minjian xiaoqu* (folk tunes), film musicals, revolutionary model operas and ballet. In this chapter, my definition of Chinese musical theatre is limited to staged works that are influenced by western (especially Broadway) musical theatre, which are distinct from the Chinese forms mentioned above: traditional theatre, folk tunes, modern operas and ballet created in the mode of classical western styles.

However, there are also problems with this definition. First of all, as a highly sophisticated genre, the Broadway musical theatre is not a singular form. Some of its classics, such as *Porgy and Bess*, *Sweeney Todd* and *A Little Night Music*, have blurred boundaries with opera. Furthermore, since the late 1960s, it has grown into different shapes and forms that comprise the concept musical, the rock musical, the jukebox musical and the imported megamusical. Consequently, its influence could be ambiguous. The second problem is that it seems to exclude the contribution of the traditional theatre and folk tunes to the Chinese musical theatre, confining its music style to exclusively western-influenced popular tunes. However, this assessment ignores the fact that many popular modern and contemporary tunes are clearly imprinted with *xiqu* and folk tunes and a great number of these forms feature popular songs.

To draw clearer parameters for this term, I propose two additional concepts. One, the Broadway book musical from the Golden Age and the megamusical should be the two loci of comparison. Works from the early Chinese musical theatre era (1920s–1970s) were inspired by Broadway book musicals, whereas Chinese musical theatre since the 1980s displays substantial megamusical influence. Two, Chinese musical theatre is highly hybrid from its very genesis. The Broadway musical theatre, developed out of nineteenth-century European light opera, opera comique and operetta, and matured in the 1920s under the influence of vaudeville, burlesque, minstrelsy and early jazz, is itself innately hybrid and has little in common with highly conventionalized *xiqu* forms such as *jingju* and *kunqu*. From the 1920s onwards, modern theatre practitioners tried to revolutionize the ‘outdated’ *xiqu* and sought a new and more ‘advanced’ form of musical theatre. They did not simply take the existent Broadway musical theatre and infuse it with Chinese content. Instead, they made innovations in the form to cater to the constantly changing political climate, Chinese aesthetics and native palates.

The genre began with Li Jinhui (1891–1967) and his *gewuju* (song and dance theatre). Endorsing the popularization of Mandarin, moral values and aesthetic education on a national level, Li created highly successful children’s *gewuju* pieces that highlighted the anti-feudalist and nationalist ideology and love of beauty, with works such as *Putao xianzi* (The Grape Fairy, 1923; Figure 24.2), *San hudie* (Three Butterflies, 1924) and *Xiao xiao huajia* (The Little Painter, 1926). Inspired by American jazz records, popular tunes from Broadway musicals and Hollywood movies as well as Chinese folk music, Li composed such love songs as *Maomao yu* (The Drizzle) and *Taohua jiang* (Peach Blossom River). As sheet music and gramophone records became popular, Li’s music was played to a wider circulation in venues such as nightclubs and cabarets, which later led to controversy in the perceived content and context of his music.

His musical theatre successfully integrated popular songs, dances and well-made (love) stories, all of which were key features of the Broadway book musical. He also established the first music school – *Zhonghua gewu xuexiao* (The Chinese Song and Dance School) – in 1927 to train professional musical theatre actors without charge. From this school graduated several of the brightest stars of the 1930s and 1940s, including ‘golden voice’ Zhou Xuan (1920–57) and the legendary actress Wang Renmei (1914–87). However, Li encountered severe attacks



Figure 24.2 Li Jinhui's daughter Li Minghui (1909–2003) posing for *Putao Xianzi* (The Grape Fairy) in 1927 as a student of The Chinese Song and Dance School.

(From *Shibao huatu* [The Eastern Times Photo Supplement], 24 July 1927)

from leftist composers such as He Luting and Nie Er in the wake of Japan's annexation of Manchuria in 1931, who criticized Li's music as 'decadent', 'opium in disguise' and 'completely inappropriate' by encouraging people to indulge in demeaning pleasure in times of war (Sun 2007).

To confront Li's 'decadent' inventions, leftist composers and theatre practitioners created notable works such as *Wang Zhaojun* (1930, Zhang Shu), *Yangzijiang shang de fengbao* (Thunderstorm over the Yangtze River, 1934, Tian Han and Nie Er), *Mulan congjun* (Mulan Joins the Army, 1945, Xu Ruhui) and *Meng Jiang Nü* (Lady Meng Jiang, or The Great Wall, 1946, lyrics by Jiang Chunfang). Integrating western operatic structure into the songs, dances and a story well known to the Chinese, *Meng Jiang Nü* is the first production on the Chinese