

Contents



Foreword 1

The Birth and Evolution of Peking Opera 13

- Anhui Troupes Moved into Beijing 14
- The Art of Listening, Old-Style Theaters 20
- Old Beijing in Peking Opera's Heyday 26
- Theatrical Companies and Old-Style Opera Schools 30
- Theaters, Temple Fairs and *Tanghui* 35

The Stage, Props and Orchestra 45

- A Table and Two Chairs 46
- Wen Wu Chang 52

Performing Art 55

- Four Roles of *Sheng*, *Dan*, *Jing* and *Chou* 56
- Acting 63
- Singing, Dancing and Acting Skills 68
- "Realms" of Acting 72

Performers and Performing Schools 77

- Nan Dan*, or Men Playing Female Roles 85
- Generations of Famous Actors 89
- Mei Lanfang, Famous *Dan* Impersonator 97

Modern Peking Operas 123

Conventions of Peking Opera 129

It is Not Easy to Appreciate Peking Opera 133

Peking Opera in the Contemporary Era 141

