



February 19 (Wed), 2020, 18:30h

**Why Is It So Difficult to Buy a Ticket for the Musical?**

Adaptive Innovation in Japanese Musical Theater from the 1960s to the Present

Rina Tanaka, Meiji University

This presentation will offer an overview of Japanese popular musical theater focusing on its systematic and strategic adaptation for the growing and changing needs of its diversifying audience groups. In the past decades, Japanese popular musical theater has drastically transformed, expanding its presence in the domestic entertainment industry by ticket distribution adaptive to new communication systems for better accessibility and consumability.

The history of operational adaptation in Japan's popular musical theater began with the Japanese-styled long run system in the late-1960s that ran Japanese productions of Broadway musicals with the star system. With the advent of Andrew Lloyd Webber's massive hit musicals and Disney productions, there were continuous innovations in developing a visitor-friendly system, beginning with an operated telephone booking service (1984) and its later automation (1993), the introduction of ticketing at convenience stores (1998), and the development of an eTicket service (1999). After the bursting of the bubble economy in 1991, which caused the decrease of corporate sponsorship and tour groups for theaters, Japanese musical theater has been systematized with a focus on theater productions featuring a large variety of star performers, including theater performers, opera singers, kabuki actors, voice actors/actresses, and in addition, "talents" and "idols" who are specialized in television entertainment. Recently, the rotating cast system, which allows each audience to choose and buy a ticket for a favorite cast combination on the list of daily cast members, has become fashionable. The jumble of popular performers attracting their respective ardent fan groups in the musicals is related to uneven audience distribution, which boosted unauthorized ticket resale at inflated prices and resulted in the legislation against ticket scalping, which came into force in 2019.

*Rina Tanaka is a PhD Candidate at Meiji University, a lecturer at Kanagawa University, and was a visiting fellow at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien. Her primary research interest is sociocultural transitions and (re-)contextualization of popular musical theater since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially between German-speaking countries and Japan.*

**About:**

The DIJ History and Humanities Study Group is a forum open to scholars working on Japan in any field of the humanities. It is organized by Barbara Geilhorn and Torsten Weber. All are welcome to attend, but prior registration online at [www.dijtokyo.org](http://www.dijtokyo.org) or by email ([geilhorn@dijtokyo.org](mailto:geilhorn@dijtokyo.org)) is greatly appreciated.

**Venue:**

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