Lyrical Anatomy
or
The Work of the *Jingju* (Beijing Opera) Actor

Chinese *jingju* (Beijing opera) is famous for its complexity. Going through a long and demanding learning process the actor has to acquire the skills of *chang* (singing), *nian* (speech), *zuo* (acting), *da* (combat). The roles are „ready made", so the actors learn them with full choreography.

The thesis is the work of a Hungarian stage director of *huaju* (spoken drama), who can speak Chinese and did fieldwork in China. Her focus of interest is character formation in the highly stylized world of *jingju*. By comparing several actresses in the same role the author is trying to reveal the hidden factors of the actor's work. Since there has been much misinterpretation of *jingju* in Western theatre circles, the thesis aims at giving a clear perspective of the *jingju* actor's work to Western stage professionals.

The thesis also tackles aesthetic principles and audience perception. By drawing comparisons between the two systems of stage work, the author hopes to provide an angle of vision that might turn out to be useful in Western stage work as well.