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XIN FENGXIA AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHINA'S PING OPERA

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Abstract: This Element focuses on Xin Fengxia (1927–98), a star of China's regional *xiqu* (traditional Chinese theatre) form *pingju* (ping opera), and her prominent role in transforming the genre from folk entertainment for the lower class to one of the most notable winners in the *xiqu* reform after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The Element's four sections expand on this core concept to include the four stages of her life experience and artistry that shaped her legacy: growing up in China's third-largest theatre market Tianjin before 1949, national stardom in Beijing (1949–57), creativity amidst political upheavals (1957–76), and as a prominent author after a stroke (1976–98). Rather than following a biographical approach, these sections zero in on the environment before and after 1949 that made her a prominent *pingju* star and the consequent price of such success.

Keywords: Chinese theatre, Xin Fengxia, *pingju* (ping opera), theatre and the state, actresses

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