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| Geijutsu-za |
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| The Geijutsu-za (Art Theatre) first iteration was founded in 1913 by the actors Shimomura Hōgetsu (1871-1918) and Matsui Sumako (1886-1919) after they were expelled from Tsubouchi Shōyo’s (1859-1935) Bungei-kyōkai for fraternization. The lovers, Matsui in particular, had been acclaimed for their acting with Bungei-kyōkai, and they continued their successes at the Geijutsu-za. Unfortunately, Shimomura succumbed in November 1918 to the worldwide influenza epidemic, and a distraught Matsui committed suicide two months later. With their loss, the company disbanded until it was reformed in 1924 by one of the original members, playwright and director Mizutani Chikushi (1882-1935). The revived company lasted until 1945.  The company’s successes from 1913-1918 were the result of Shimomura’s promotional talent capitalizing on the daring charisma of Matsui. The novelty of seeing real women, banned from the Tokyo stage for almost three centuries, Matsui’s talent and her artistic rivalry with Kawakami Sada Yakko (1871-1946), created a rich vein for Shimomura to mine. In the second Geijutsu-za offering, Matsui created a sensation playing Oscar Wilde’s *Salome*. The company’s third production, Shimomura’s adaptation of Tolstoy’s *Fukkatsu* (*Resurrection*) in 1914, with Matsui playing the role of Katsusha, was one of *shingeiki*’s greatest popular and commercial hits. |
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