

= Grand Guignol Orchestra =

Grand Guignol Orchestra (Japanese : ?????? , Hepburn : Guignol Ky?tei Gakudan) is a gothic horror sh?jo (targeted towards girls) manga series written and illustrated by Kaori Yuki . Appearing as a monthly serial in the Japanese manga magazine Bessatsu Hana to Yume from the August 2008 issue to the June 2010 issue , the eighteen chapters of Grand Guignol Orchestra were collected into five bound volumes by Hakusensha ? together with Yuki 's romantic one @-@ shot manga " Camolet Garden " , which had appeared in the April 2008 issue ? and published from February 2009 to August 2010 . Set in a world where a worldwide epidemic of a virus has turned part of the population into guignols (zombies which resemble marionettes) , Grand Guignol Orchestra focuses on singer Lucille and his orchestra , which destroys the guignols through music .

At the 2009 New York Anime Festival , Viz Media announced that it had licensed the series for an English @-@ language translation . It published the series under its Shojo Beat imprint , from October 2010 to December 2011 . The series has also been translated into other languages , such as German and Mandarin . Grand Guignol Orchestra has been positively received by English @-@ language readers , with three volumes placing on the list of the top 300 bestselling graphic novels . The series has received a range of reviews from English @-@ language critics . Yuki 's illustrations and premise were generally well @-@ received , with criticism of the series focused on the narrative and page layouts .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting = = =

Manga artist Kaori Yuki has described the setting of Grand Guignol Orchestra as the " Middle Ages (sort of) with a French air . " The series takes place in a fictional universe , where an worldwide epidemic of a virus , the Galatea Syndrome (????????? , Garateia Shoukougun) , has turned part of the population into guignols (????? , Giniy?ru) , zombies which resemble marionettes . Certain types of music can restore humanity and memories to the guignols while speeding up their destruction ; the queen 's Grand Orchestra destroys guignols through music , as does the much smaller , unofficial Grand Orchestra . If an area becomes more than seventy percent infected by the virus , the queen sends her Divine Lightning (?? , Kami Kaminari) to destroy the area and keep the virus from spreading . The virus , however , originates from the first queen , whose father transformed her into a guignol ; subsequent queens and their potential successors are grown from her cells . Opposed to the queen 's rule is Le Sénat : consuls Richter (????? , Richiteraitu) and Valentine (????? , Barentinaitu) , chancellor Meerscham (????? , Miatsuyamu) , and regent Jasper (????? , Jayasup?) , all of whom have been governing for a century .

= = = Story = = =

The plot follows the unofficial Grand Orchestra led by singer Lucille (??? , Ruchiru) , who searches for a way to rescue his younger sister Cordierite " Cordie " (????????? , Kodiaraito) ? who now despises him as the cold @-@ hearted Queen Gemsilica , convinced that he tricked her into becoming queen in his place . The other members include the violence @-@ prone violinist Kohaku (???) , who was bitten by a guignol ; and cellist Gwindel " Gwin " (????? , Guwinderu) , a former sculptor of guignols who keeps his daughter 's hedgehog with him . They are soon joined by pianist Celestite " Celes " (????? , Seresutaito) , who has lived under the identity of her twin brother , Elestial " Eles " (????? , Eresutiaru) after a guignol attack left her the only surviving child in her town . They periodically encounter Berthier (???? , Beruchie) , the unofficial orchestra 's former pianist whose violence drove his beloved , Lucille , away and who was resurrected by Le Sénat after his suicide . Other reoccurring characters include Spinel (???? , Supineru) , a spy for the queen who can manipulate her voice and whom Lucille befriended when she snuck into the all @-@ male

monastery as a child .

The unofficial orchestra visits infected towns and destroys the guignols there for a fee . Eventually , they obtain the Black Oratorio (????? , Kuro no Hijiri Tan Kyoku) , rumoured to be able to destroy the queen and neutralize the virus when performed . Having left Eles behind for her own protection and unaware that she took the Black Oratorio out of fear of its effects on the orchestra , Lucille and his orchestra confront Queen Gemsilica , and find Berthier with a kidnapped Eles and the Black Oratorio . Queen Gemsilica is fatally wounded by their servant Cookiete " Cook " (???? , Kukitu) . Secretly the host of the original king , Cook is responsible for the manipulation that caused her to become queen instead of Lucille . Berthier , persuaded to return the Black Oratorio , kills Cook as he attempts to escape , and the music of the Black Oratorio is broadcast throughout the world by the satellites formerly used for Divine Lightning . Upon hearing the music , the guignols sing along and are destroyed . Separated from Lucille and the orchestra , Eles realizes that she can live as herself now . Later , she joyfully reunites with Lucille , and rejoins the unofficial orchestra , all of whom have been affected by the neutralization of the virus .

= = Development = =

Yuki noted that the title of the series was potentially misleading , as the orchestra is not composed of guignols ; she chose the word " guignol " ? which describes hand puppets , not marionettes ? for its sound . Page limitations affected the roles of Kohaku and Carnelian , Lucille 's castrato rival , although she felt that the story still ended as she had planned it . She also faced difficulty with Berthier 's character design . Initially , she planned to have him appear in a " full @-@ body animal suit " costume , but decided against the idea as " too comical . " One of his early character designs was used for a minor character , an assassin for Le Sénat .

Included with the bound @-@ volume release of Grand Guignol Orchestra is " Camolet Garden " , Yuki 's 92 @-@ page romantic one @-@ shot manga originally published in the April 2008 issue of the monthly sh?jo (targeted towards girls) manga magazine Bessatsu Hana to Yume . It focuses on Ry? , who finds himself in a boys ' dormitory , where its inhabitants have ranks corresponding to a deck of playing cards . He struggles to solve the mystery of the boys ' dormitory , closed off from the outside world and where death only results in rebirth . In it , Yuki made allusions to the Victorian poem " The Lady of Shalott " by the English poet Alfred , Lord Tennyson . In retrospective , she felt that its setting was " not really the best , " and the many characters presented some difficulty in remembering .

= = Release = =

Written and illustrated by Kaori Yuki , Grand Guignol Orchestra appeared as a serial in Bessatsu Hana to Yume from the August 2008 issue , to the June 2010 issue . Hakusensha collected the eighteen chapters into five bound volumes , and released them from 19 February 2009 , to 19 August 2010 .

At the 2009 New York Anime Festival , Viz Media announced that it had licensed the series and would publish the series under its Shojo Beat imprint . Viz Media published the series from 5 October 2010 , to 6 December 2011 . It also released a digital version of the series . The series is distributed by Madman Entertainment in Australasia (Australia and New Zealand) . It has also been translated into other languages , among them German , Italian , French , and Mandarin .

= = Volume list = =

= = Reception = =

Grand Guignol Orchestra was positively received by English @-@ language readers . Three volumes appeared on the list of the 300 bestselling graphic novels . The first volume sold 464

copies and appeared at the 256th spot on October 2010 ; it reached the fifteenth spot in BookScan 's list of the twenty bestselling graphic novels for September 2011 . The second volume sold an estimated 334 copies , and appeared at the 265th spot for February 2011 . The fifth volume sold an estimated 297 copies , and appeared at the 267th spot .

Writing for School Library Journal 's blog Good Comics for Kids , Snow Wildsmith reviewed the first volume positively , and wrote , " The elements her fans adore are all there : beautiful characters , gender ambiguity , horror themes , blood and gore , and , of course , gorgeous costumes . " According to Wildsmith , the unexplained aspects of the plot helped to create interest for the readers . David Welsh of Comic World News had more mixed feelings about the first volume ; although he praised the aesthetic , premise , translation , and guignols , he wrote that Yuki 's work would be more appealing " if she could just strike that balance between creative focus and intellectual abandon and emotional shamelessness . " About.com 's Deb Aoki reviewed it negatively , criticizing its plot . Aoki wrote that it would only appeal to fans of Yuki . While finding aspects of the setting and costume design historically confusing and trying on the reader 's suspension of disbelief , Rebecca Silverman of Anime News Network wrote that the Gwin 's backstory , the quick pacing , Yuki 's detailed art , and her frightening portrayal of zombies made the third volume " a winning entry in an already fascinating series . " Silverman had mixed feelings about the dense page layouts : according to her , they contributed to the narrative suspense , although they affected the reader 's ability to easily read the volume in places . In her review of the fourth volume , Silverman praised the character development and Yuki 's ability to create mysteries , although she wrote that not all readers would enjoy the numerous plot twists . She also suggested the possibility of a metaphor for the French Revolution in the series . Another reviewer for Anime News Network , Carlo Santos gave the third volume a C- ; while he praised Yuki 's illustrations and ability to create " dramatic revelations , " he wrote that it was overshadowed by the confusing and cluttered narrative .

Sequential Tart 's Sheena McNeil reviewed the series positively , with Yuki 's art , characterization , and storytelling a source of praise . She , however , expressed her feelings of annoyance and frustration with the conclusion of the fourth volume , which saw the female characters left behind on purpose by the male members of the orchestra and then Eles ' kidnapping by Berthier . She also wrote that Yuki 's inclusion of a happy ending felt surprising compared to the rest of the story . Reviewing " Camelot Garden " , she enjoyed it less than Grand Guignol Orchestra , and wrote that the short story contained an implicit reference to Lewis Carroll 's children 's novel Through the Looking Glass (1871) and its character , the ever @-@ sleeping Red King .