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Autore	Eckersall Peter
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Sommario/riassunto	This is the first history of Japan's avant-garde underground theatre (angura) in a time of its most intense, creative, and original productions, viz. 1960-2000. It closely investigates the interrelationship of aesthetics and politics and explores contrasting examples of contemporary performance in relation to social context and cultural history. Part one considers the 1960s era of protest and theatrical invention. The second part examines theatre in the 1980s, a time of unprecedented economic boom. The final section considers the work of four of the most important companies of the 1990s and explores how they are grappling with manifold new political and artistic challenges.