



"Tsuru Onna" scene of great drama from classic Bunraku repertoire.

Classic Japanese puppet theatre entertains Ottawans

Bunraku, Japan's national puppet theatre, appeared for the first time in Canada at the National Arts Centre last month. It played also in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The troupe consists of 70 members, who are divided almost evenly into three categories: puppet operators, *yoruri* reciters and *samisen* players, all of which require many years of training. The Bunraku puppet show dates back to the middle of the 17th century, when the three art forms mentioned above were combined to form what is known today as Bunraku.

The dolls, which are about half life-size, are meticulously constructed. Their eyes move, their eyebrows rise, their mouths shut, and their arms gesture gracefully and realistically.

Each doll is usually operated by three manipulators, who work in unison. They carry the dolls on to the stage and are visible throughout the play.

The chief manipulator operates the eyes, eyebrows, mouth and the puppet's right arm. It is possible to open and shut the fingers of the puppet. The chief manipulator wears a sort of high, wooden-soled sandal, raising him about half a foot higher than the second and third manipulators, as they can work together more easily at slightly different levels.

The second operator moves the left hand and the third, the feet. As the female doll has no legs, the third operator moves its skirt in such a way as to create the illusion of moving legs.

The *yoruri* reciter, who tells the story and chants, shouts, whispers or sobs the dialogue for all characters in the play (in some cases many reciters appear simultaneously), sits with his *samisen* accompanists, each resplendent in the traditional formal dress, in full view on an elevated dais at the side of the stage.

The *samisen* player provides not only musical accompaniment but also indicates, where appropriate, the sound of rain or other effects to heighten the atmosphere.

More money needed by the performing arts

The authors of a study published recently by the Canada Council call for co-operative public and private action to ease the financial burdens of Canadian performing-arts companies, and propose that certain companies be designated "national arts assets".

The study, entitled *Subsidy Patterns*

for the Performing Arts in Canada, was conducted on commission from the Canada Council by Frank T. Pasquill and a team from York University's program in arts administration, under the direction of Professor Paul Schafer. It is one of a series of studies on the performing arts undertaken or commissioned by the Council with a view to drawing up a general policy in the field.

Funding inadequate

The report analyzes support from various levels of government and the private sector for orchestras and for dance, opera and theatre companies. It concludes that present funding of these companies is inadequate, and presents a number of recommendations to ensure the stability and growth of Canadian performing-arts organizations.

Among other things, the report recommends:

(1) that both the public and private sectors increase their present subsidy of performing-arts organizations (from about \$20 million in 1970-71 to \$32.5 million in 1974-75);

(2) that the Canada Council formulate a policy on the performing arts similar to that adopted by the Secretary of State for museums, publishing and film;

(3) that the Federal Government recognize some major performing-arts companies as "national arts assets" and that special formulas be developed for their funding;

(4) that the Canada Council consider extending the support for the performing arts that it has usually reserved for professional companies to include groups approaching professional excellence in creativity and artistic quality;

(5) that the Canada Council study the prospect of funding innovative and Canadian experimental works;

(6) that the Canada Council encourage a more equitable geographic distribution of financial support to the performing arts;

(7) that the Canada Council urge the governments of larger urban centres to increase their support to performing companies, and aid them in developing effective means of evaluating grant requests;

(8) that the Canada Council encour-