

## **BUNRAKU FAST FACTS**

- Bunraku puppetry originated in Japan over 300 years ago
- A traditional Bunraku puppet is manipulated with 3 puppeteers
- Many modern puppeteers have been inspired to make Bunraku style puppets with a twist



**Question:** If Bunraku style puppets can do everything we humans can do, why not have a human do the performance?

**Spica:** Puppets call attention to the small details and moments that we typically miss when watching humans. The puppets remind of us the beauty in our world.

**Rachel:** The puppets also allow us to play with <u>scale</u> and travel to places like a caisson. We didn't have the space on stage to make a life like caisson for a human sized performer, but we could create the sense of depth and claustrophobic conditions for a puppet like Jimmy.

**Question:** Why do you love Bunraku style puppetry?

**Spica:** It helps the viewer slow down and pay attention. Jimmy doesn't have to do acrobatics for us to take notice. Look how much we focus on his small gestures like brushing his hair and pulling up his pants



**Rachel:** It amazes me how lifelike these puppets can be and how invested I become in the puppet's world and journey. For example, I know that the puppet's face is not moving or expressing any emotions, but I really feel like I am seeing and sensing the puppet's facial expressions. Or I know there are puppeteers moving the puppet, but after a while I stop seeing the puppeteers and the puppet appears to be moving on their own. So cool!

**Question:** Why did you choose to use Bunraku style puppets for *Jimmy's story?* 

**Rachel:** Their small size allowed us to bring the world of the caisson to life while also sharing the human emotions.

**Question:** How is Jimmy made?

**Spica:** With paper mache! Lots of paper mache!

# **EXTRA PUPPET CHALLENGES**

#### DAILY ACTIVITIES

Try these exercises with your Bunraku style puppet:

- Waking up
- Make and drink hot chocolate
- Plant a seed



### **EMOTIONAL ROLLER COASTER**

How does your puppet express the following emotions. And remember they cannot make facial expressions, so can you show these emotions by using the rest of their body?

• Grumpy

• Afraid

Excited

• Impatient

Surprised

• Calm

## **BUNRAKU FIELD DAY**: Give your puppet a workout!

• Jump

• Summersault

• Run

• Skip

Cartwheel

• Dance

• Have a dance party with your puppet!

### **BUDDY UP!** (If possible)

- Start with simple steps like breathing together, noticing something, waving, standing up and starting to walk.
- —If you have one buddy: Person A is the head and one arm, Person B is the feet.
- —If you have two buddies: Person A is the head and one arm, Person B is the remaining arm, Person C is the feet.

## **DISCOVER MORE...**

https://traditionalkyoto.com/culture/bunraku/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEUQNvn8EJQ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEWpm2g9Wzc