

PERFORMANCE GUIDE

WINNIE-THE-POOH AND BUNRAKU TOO!

**BY THE HTY ENSEMBLE
ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK BY A.A. MILNE**



WWW.HTYWEB.ORG

**ALOHA FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,
ERIC JOHNSON**



Dear Educator,

Welcome to Honolulu Theatre for Youth's 70th Season!

The season starts with a beloved classic told in a new way. While adapting this story, we were inspired by the Japanese form of Bunraku puppetry and hope to engage the student's cultural curiosity. You will find lots of useful information about that artform in this guide along with ways to engage with the original stories.

Thank you so much for taking the time to look over these resource materials. Our greatest hope is to be a useful partner inside and outside the classroom. If you would like more information on the company or our work, look us up at htyweb.org.

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OUR PARTNERS

We have been fortunate to work with generous partners and funders on the creation of this project.

**The Hawai'i State Department of Health-
Maternal and Child Health Branch**

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Written by The HTY Ensemble, Adapted from the book by A.A. Milne, illustrated by E. H. Shepard

Directed by Eric Johnson

Set and Prop Design by

Chesley Cannon
Eric West

Costume Design by

Iris Kim

Video and Lighting Design by

Chesley Cannon

Puppet Design by

Chesley Cannon
Lynn Jeffries
Eric West
Iris Kim

Sound and Music by

Mattea Mazzella

Puppetry Master Consultant

Lynn Jeffries

Puppet Construction

Chesley Cannon
Sarah Danvers
Lynn Jeffries
Iris Kim
Sofia Mishima
KG Pan
Eric West

Stage Manager

Sarah Danvers

Performed by

Annie Lokomaika'i Lipscomb
Mattea Mazzella
Kalā Muller
Hermenigildo Tesoro, Jr.
Emily Wright

Study Guide by

Reiko Ho

**National Core Arts Standards
compiled by**

Daniel A. Kelin, II



ABOUT OUR SHOW- NOTES FROM DIRECTOR, ERIC JOHNSON

WHY POOH?

Poet A.A. Milne broke with tradition and wrote Winnie-the-Pooh as if he were speaking directly to his own child, Christopher Robin. Christopher Robin's stuffed animals became the inspirations for the main characters in the story. The story revolved around his son's interests, often placing Christopher Robin as the hero and the voice of reason and authority within the story. In the book, the narrator and Christopher Robin work together to create a world crafted for an audience of one, making the journey feel more like a made-up story at bedtime rather than a piece of literature. The irony is that by focusing on one child's experience, Milne created one of the most universally beloved pieces of children's literature. Long before the Disney cartoon, these books were translated and enjoyed around the world. Many an adult and child have curled up with these books and few stuffed toys, ready to take their own journey with these characters.

WHY BUNRAKU?

The ancient Japanese form of puppetry is called Ningyō jōruri which means "storytelling with dolls." The form is now called Bunraku. Bunraku is rigorous, detailed, and precise. On the surface it seems to be the opposite of a child playing with stuffed animals. But is it? A child acting out a story with action figures understands the limitations of the doll but invests them with a full emotional life. A. A. Milne certainly respected the stuffed toys when writing the characters of the Pooh stories. Could there be a world where we connect the technique and structure of Bunraku with the language of the Milne stories and the spirit of a child playing with stuffed animals?

As an ensemble, we explore these questions as a team. Being from Hawaii, it is natural for us to find inspiration in different types of theatrical traditions, especially those culturally important to our community. In this production, you will see elements of traditional Japanese staging, puppetry, music, and learn a little about Bunraku. We hope to inspire the storytellers and theatre makers of the future, giving them both a taste of what has been done before and to excite them to create new work with the pile of stuffed toys they have tucked away.

A. A. MILNE AND THE CREATION OF WINNIE-THE-POOH



Winnie-the-Pooh first appeared by name as a children's story commissioned by London's Evening News for Christmas Eve in 1925. The author, A. A. Milne, named the character after his young son's beloved toy bear, Winnie, who was named in honor of Winnipeg the bear who they loved to visit in the London Zoo. The author's son, Christopher Robin Milne, became the inspiration for the character of Christopher Robin in the stories. The story was set in Hundred Acre Wood inspired by Ashdown Forest in East Sussex where Milne's country house was located— a place he liked to walk in with his son.

A. A. Milne went on to pen two collections of stories about Winnie-the-Pooh, Christopher Robin, and friends in Hundred Acre Wood— Winnie-the-Pooh (1926) and House at Pooh Corner (1927). Poems about Winnie-the-Pooh were also included in his books of children's verses, *When We Were Very Young* (1924), and *Now We Are Six* (1927). All four volumes were beautifully illustrated by E. H. Shepard.



THE JAPANESE ART OF BUNRAKU



Above Photo: Wikimedia Commons



The puppetry for the characters in our production is inspired by the Japanese art of Bunraku.

Bunraku, also known as Ningyō jōruri, is a traditional Japanese form of puppetry that originated in Osaka in the 1600s. It was born out of a collaboration by playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724) and the chanter Takemoto Gidayu (1651–1714) who founded the Takemoto Puppet Theatre in Osaka in 1684.

The term Bunraku began being used in 1805 and originally referred to a specific theater which was named the Bunrakuza after the puppeteering ensemble of Uemura Bunrakuken, a puppeteer from Awaji who brought his style to Osaka. Bunraku is still performed today and Osaka is home to the National Bunraku Theatre.

There are **three performance elements** in Bunraku or Ningyō jōruri: the **Ningyōzukai** (puppeteers), the **tayū** (chanters), and the **shamisen** (musicians). Ningyō is the Japanese word for puppet or doll and jōruri refers to the combination of chanting and shamisen playing. The tayū (singer/chanter) narrates the story and becomes all the voices for the characters.

One of the unique aspects of Bunraku is that three puppeteers manipulate each individual puppet.

The **main puppeteer (Omo-zukai)** operates the right hand of the puppet while supporting its torso and moving the head. The **left puppeteer (Hidari-zukai)** operates the left hand of the puppet with his right hand. The **foot puppeteer (Ashi-zukai)** operates the puppet's feet in a bent-over position.

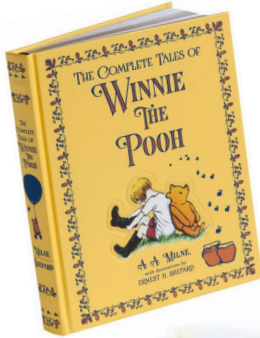
The three puppeteers work as a team to make the puppet move as if it were a living person, using cues to signal one another without speaking to each other.

The puppeteers normally wear black costumes and black hoods, called *kuroko*, but occasionally the *omozukai* will appear in a hoodless *kimono*.



To become an accomplished *omozukai* has been said to take a total of thirty years; ten years as *ashizukai*, a further ten years as *hidarizukai*, and ten years as *omozukai*.

BOOKS FOR THE CLASSROOM



- Read *Winnie-the-Pooh* by A. A. Milne online or download at <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/67098>
- *Winnie-the-Pooh* Written by A. A. Milne and Illustrated by E.H. Shepard
- *The House at Pooh Corner* by A. A. Milne and Illustrated by E.H. Shepard



VIDEOS

- A. A. Milne- video about the author appropriate for kids by Paint by Monster
<https://youtu.be/468tlfX9gsw?si=jkYHeJuovXakj8VT>
- *Winnie the Pooh* by A. A. Milne: Pooh Goes Visiting and Gets Into a Tight Place | READ ALOUD
https://youtu.be/y6_dUbO9JS8?si=3oOpi3Ohp6E1twVI
- Winnie The Pooh - Shepard The Artist's Story
Clip from BBC about the illustrator.
<https://youtu.be/ux6M3sL2MV8?si=KNUXv1pqWMo6gFSD>
- Bunraku | Japanese Culture
Clip from PBS Hawaii learning media library, includes teacher materials about Bunraku.
<https://hawaii.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/jacult.arts.drama.bunraku/japanese-culture-bunraku/>



POST SHOW DISCUSSION

PLAY IS AN IMPORTANT WAY THAT YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD—FROM HOW THINGS WORK TO HOW TO INTERACT IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS. WHAT DO YOU THINK CHRISTOPHER ROBIN LEARNED DURING HIS PLAY WITH THE ANIMALS IN THE HUNDRED ACRE WOOD??

EACH OF CHARACTERS HAVE A UNIQUE PERSONALITY. DO YOU THINK YOU'RE MORE LIKE POOH, EYORE, OWL, PIGLET, RABBIT, OR CHRISTOPHER ROBIN? WHY?

OUR TEAM USED BUNRAKU TO BRING THE PUPPETS TO LIFE. WHAT DID YOU LEARN OR FIND INTERESTING ABOUT THIS TRADITIONAL FORM OF JAPANESE PUPPETRY?

**WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF OUR PERFORMANCE?
AND WHY?**

CREATE YOUR OWN PUPPET PLAY

A.A. Milne's inspiration for creating Winnie-the-Pooh was watching his son, Christopher Robin, playing with his stuffed bear. Using stuffed toys and dolls, create your own puppet play based on a favorite story.

Lesson Objective

To foster creative collaboration and teamwork while students dramatize stories and practice reading comprehension.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| STEP 1 | Choose a Winnie-the-Pooh story or another favorite story and read it aloud to your class. |
| STEP 2 | Prepare your students. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assign characters to different students.• Have students bring in a favorite stuffed toy or doll (or create your own puppets out of found objects or other material(s) to use as puppet characters. <p>Note: You may wish to divide the class into small groups or perform as a whole group.</p> |
| STEP 3 | Prompts for Students <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. "I will tell the story and you will act out the action with your puppets."b. "If I stop, please speak for your character, creating dialogue or what the character might say."c. "How can you show what the characters are feeling using your puppets?" |
| STEP 4 | Narrate the story <p>Allow the students to creatively improvise and perform the actions of the story as you narrate. Validate and note strong choices made by students as they enact the story and encourage students to add details that show the actions and reactions of their character.</p> |
| STEP 5 | If time, go through the story again <p>Encourage more detailed exploration of the story and characters. Ask students to suggest other lines of dialogue that the characters might say.</p> |

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER IN THE PLAY?

Is there a character you really like in the play?

All of the characters had distinct personalities and ways of speaking.

Who are a few you remember?

Discuss the characters with the class and have students draw their favorite character.

Lesson Objective

To generate discussion about the play, reinforce the concept of a “character,” and allow students to respond and connect to the characters they saw onstage.

STEP 1

Discuss the characters in the play.

- Create a list of characters with the students
- Discuss the personalities of the characters.

STEP 2

Have Students Choose a Character to Draw

Use the worksheet on the next page as a handout for the students.

STEP 3

Prompts for Students

- a. “What are some adjectives you could use to describe your character?”
- b. “Imagine a moment in the play with your chosen character. What are they feeling? What are they doing?”
- c. “Draw the picture you are imagining of your character.”

STEP 4

Show and Discuss the Pictures



WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER

My character in the play is _____.

This character is (describe your character) _____.

Draw a picture of your favorite character.





ABOUT HTY

Honolulu Theatre for Youth (HTY) is a theatre of place, deeply rooted in the cultures and people of the Pacific and dedicated to serving young people, families and educators across the Hawaiian Islands. Founded in 1955, HTY is one of the oldest professional TYA companies in the country and is recognized for its long history of innovative drama education programming and the creation of original theatrical works that celebrate the diverse cultures of Hawai'i.

OUR COMPANY

Becky Dunning
Managing Director

Stu Hirayama
School Reservations

Brad DeCaires
Box Office

Fay Ann Chun
Grants Manager

Jian Gu
Accounting

Eric Johnson
Artistic Director

Reiko Ho
Artistic Associate/Marketing

Moses Goods
Artistic Associate/Actor

Annie Cusick Wood
Artistic Associate

Artistic Team
Jarren Amian
Chesley Cannon
Sarah Danvers
Serina Dunham
Alysia Kepa'a
Iris Kim
Lokomaika'i Lipscomb
Mattea Mazzella
Kaonohiokalaalohilohinei Muller
Hermenigildo Tesoro Jr.
Eric West
Emily Wright

Daniel A. Kelin, II
Director of Drama Education

Tamara Smith
Drama Ed. Administrator

Clara Whippy
Teaching Artist

Ana Narrajos
Teaching Artist

Chloe Tower
Teaching Artist

Jill Jackson
Teaching Artist