

# Theatre

## Burkett's puppet masterpiece



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OP CONTRIBUTOR

*Tinka's New Dress*  
Vancouver East Cultural Centre  
Through December 15

Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes is presenting the multi-award winning play, *Tinka's New Dress* at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. It is a mesmerizing story of censorship, oppression, and the courage to fight back.

*Tinka's New Dress* tells the tale of Carl, a young puppeteer living under the rule of The Common Good, a totalitarian government that is slowly weeding out the undesirables in society (gays,

artists, free thinkers). After public shows are banned, Carl takes his puppets underground, performing his politically charged shows at an illegal cabaret. His fight against The Common Good is joined by his sister Tinka; Morag, a drag queen who runs the cabaret; and Astrid Van Craig, a wealthy patron of the arts.

The story of *Tinka's New Dress* was inspired by the puppeteers that worked in Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia during World War II. They would organize illegal performances that became known as "Daisies." These underground shows spread a feeling of unity and patriotism to the audiences.

Ronnie Burkett created the story, marionettes, costumes, and set

design of the production. He is also the only actor. Burkett operates 36 beautiful marionettes, creating vivid personalities for each character. He switches back and forth between marionettes with such ease, often playing two or three characters at once. His energy, passion and intensity are absolutely enchanting.

For two hours and fifteen minutes (with no intermission) Burkett takes the audience out of the theatre and into Carl's world. The audience is not merely watching the play, they become part of it in a way I have never before experienced. *Tinka's New Dress* is a stunning example of what all theatre should strive for, and a definite must-see for every theatre lover.