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FIGURE 7.6 An early *Noh* mask of a woman turned into a demon.

Conventions

- **Stage:** You can find a detailed description of the *Noh* stage in Chapter 5.
- **Performers:** All actors in the *Noh* drama are male.
- **Music:** On stage are four musicians playing a flute, a small drum, a large drum, and stick drums. A chorus of six to ten singers lends vocal accompaniment to the actors and musicians.
- **Masks:** This is a masked drama that allows instant character recognition.
- **Costumes:** Flamboyant costumes are designed by tradition.

The *Noh* drama is essentially unchanged from its development 600 years ago. Its appeal has fallen and risen over the centuries, but it has never faded completely. A highly revered art form today, it holds a special appeal to the intellectual and the connoisseur. Interest and attendance is on the rise again. Perhaps its grace and beauty, its ephemeral dreamlike quality, and its stately ancient conventions provide a welcome respite from the hectic pace of modern life.



FIGURE 7.7 Actors in traditional *Noh* costume.

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