

theaterdancemusic

Fall 2013

MCA STAGE

**at the
Edlis Neeson
Theater**

Body/Head
featuring Kim Gordon
and Bill Nace
Sep 24

Taylor Mac
An Abridged Concert of
The History of Political
Popular Music
Sep 27–28

Timbre 4
Tercer Cuerpo (Third Wing)
Oct 3, 5 and 6

ICE (International
Contemporary Ensemble)
John Zorn Retrospective
Oct 26

Rainpan 43
Elephant Room
Nov 2, 3, 7–10

Nassim Soleimanpour
White Rabbit, Red Rabbit
Nov 3–5 and 9

Chicago Dancemakers Forum
Break Out! Celebrating ten years
of supporting new work
by Chicago dancemakers
Nov 16

Sandra Bernhard
Everything Bad and Beautiful
Dec 5 and 7

Tsukasa Taiko
Taiko Legacy 10 and Reduction
Dec 21–22

Experience an electrifying array of
artists from around the globe—all at
a great price.

Visit mcachicago.org/stage or call
312.397.4010 for tickets.



Nassim Soleimanpour: *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit*
Photo: Nathan Keay, © MCA Chicago

Nassim Soleimanpour
White Rabbit, Red Rabbit
November 3–5 and 9, 2013
Copresented with the Chicago
Humanities Festival

Written by Nassim Soleimanpour

Featuring (in alphabetical order)

Usman Ally

Fawzia Mirza

Yasen Peyankov

Michael Shannon

White Rabbit, Red Rabbit
was originally produced by
Volcano Theatre in association
with Necessary Angel and
Wolfgang Hoffmann.

Dramaturgy by Daniel Brooks
and Ross Manson

Edlis Neeson
Theater

Museum of
Contemporary Art
Chicago

Chicago
Humanities
Festival

As part of the Chicago Humanities Festival, generous underwriting for *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* is provided by Carol Rosofsky and Robert B. Lifton.

White Rabbit, Red Rabbit is presented in association with Aurora Nova Productions.

Welcome

It is our tremendous pleasure to present a highlight of the fall season for both MCA Stage and the Chicago Humanities Festival.

Each year, we strive to highlight distinctive artists whose visions reflect and refract the annual theme of the Festival. In recent years, MCA Stage and the Chicago Humanities Festival have collaborated to bring forward memorable performances by Big Dance Theater, Liz Lerman/Dance Exchange, and Mike Daisey, just to name a few.

The current theme of *Animal: What Makes Us Human* has been especially stimulating, and so this year we are expanding by copresenting two intriguing projects. First, *Elephant Room* is a feat of misdirection. What seems to be an off-the-wall magic show turns out to be experimental theater fueled by our imaginations and our unwitting suspension of disbelief. Along the way, we are drawn into a secret society located at a point in the space-time continuum somewhere between baroque nostalgia and Paterson, New Jersey.

White Rabbit, Red Rabbit is an entirely different animal. Iranian playwright Nassim Soleimanpour refused his country's mandatory military service as a conscientious objector and was therefore refused a passport for international travel. His experience is that of many in his generation—computer literate and well informed, but living within parameters circumscribed by the Islamic Republic. Created to travel the world when he can't, his play requires no director or set, and each performance features a different actor who receives the script for the first time he or she takes the stage.

Dramatically distinct, these two works prompt us to explore what distinguishes the human

animal from others. Both *Elephant Room* and *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* explore creativity and self-awareness.

Peter Taub

Director of Performance Programs
MCA Chicago

Mary Kate Barley-Jenkins

Managing Director, Programming
and Production
Chicago Humanities Festival

MCA STAGE

at the Edlis
Neeson Theater

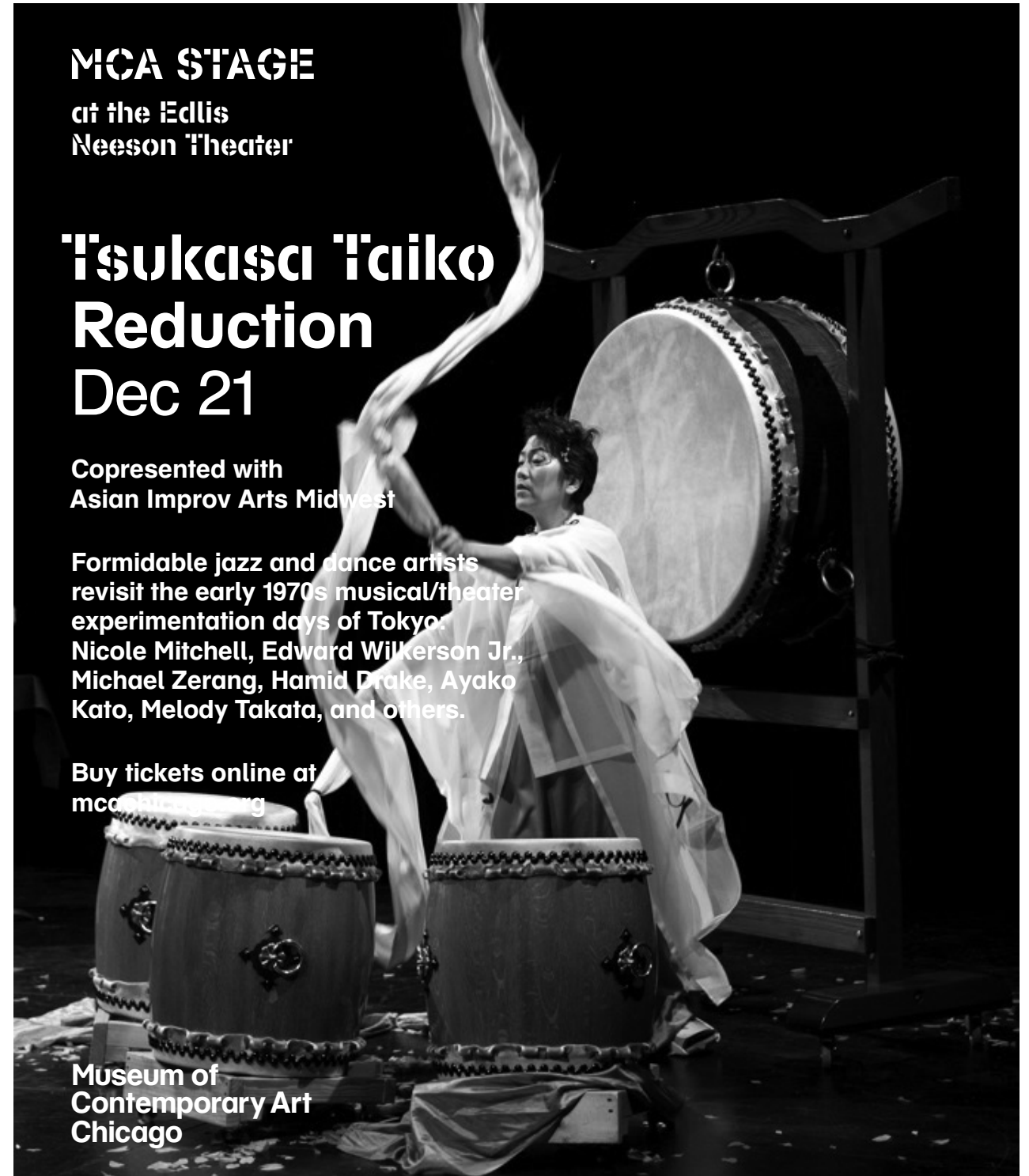
Tsukasa Taiko Reduction Dec 21

Copresented with
Asian Improv Arts Midwest

Formidable jazz and dance artists
revisit the early 1970s musical/theater
experimentation days of Tokyo.
Nicole Mitchell, Edward Wilkerson Jr.,
Michael Zerang, Hamid Drake, Ayako
Kato, Melody Takata, and others.

Buy tickets online at
mca-chicago.org

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About the work

White Rabbit, Red Rabbit is staged without Soleimanpour, a director, or a set, and features a different guest performer each night. The performer is handed the script for the first time as he or she steps onstage before the live audience. Using a menagerie of allegorical animals, the play is “not about Iran,” Soleimanpour has stated. It grapples with the social phenomena of power, obedience, and manipulation.



Nassem Soleimanpour
White Rabbit Red Rabbit
Image courtesy of Aurora Nova Productions

Artists Up Close

Gain insight into the creative process through these intimate opportunities to engage with the artists.

First Night Talks Nov 3–5 and 9

Following every performance the audience members are invited to participate in a moderated post-show discussion. Invited moderators are Jamil Khoury (Founding Artistic Director, Silk Road Rising); Katie Watson (Second City; Medical Humanities and Bioethics Program, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine); Nejla Yasmina Yarkin (ny2dance); and Narimon Safavi (WBEZ contributor, Worldview; National Iranian-American Council).

*American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation
Nov 9, 3 pm performance*

MCA STAGE

at the Edlis
Neeson Theater

Chicago Dancemakers Forum Break Out! Nov 16

Celebrating ten years of supporting new explorations by Chicago Dancemakers, this exuberant event features performances throughout the museum all day.

Buy tickets online at
mcachicago.org

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About the Artists

Nassim Soleimanpour

is an independent multidisciplinary theater maker and resides in Tehran, Iran. Written to travel the world when he couldn't, *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* has been named the Dublin Fringe Festival Best New Performance, received the SummerWorks Outstanding New Performance Text Award and the Arches Brick Award (Edinburgh Fringe), and has also been nominated for Total Theatre and Brighton Fringe Pick of Edinburgh Awards. Soleimanpour most recently participated as a panelist in the World Theatre Festival *In Conversation* series in Brisbane, Australia.

Usman Ally

was born of Pakistani parents and raised in southern and eastern Africa. He has originated several roles in world premieres of award-winning productions, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Disgraced*, for which he was nominated for a Jeff Award for Actor in a Principal Role, and the Pulitzer finalist, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. Most recently he originated the role of Bagheera in *The Jungle Book* at the Goodman Theatre. His work has been seen in major theaters around the country, as well as on television and film. Ally is a recipient of the highly prestigious Fox Foundation/Theatre Communications Group Fellowship. He holds an MFA in Acting from the University of Florida (Magna Cum Laude) and a BA in Theatre and Cultural Anthropology from Lewis & Clark College.

Fawzia Mirza

is a former-attorney-turned-actor, producer, and writer. Recent Chicago theater credits include the Goodman Theatre's *The Happiest Song Plays Last* and *Teddy Ferrara*, Silk Road Rising's *The DNA Trail* and *Scorched*, Theatre

Seven's *In the Heart of America*, and 16th Street Theater's *Dental Society Midwinter* Meeting. She has produced documentaries and starred in a number of Chicago-made indie films and web series, including her own comedic series, *Kam Kardashian*. For the last seven years she has been doing sexual violence prevention work at colleges, universities, and military institutions around the world, performing the comedic-educational show *Sex Signals*. In 2014, she will premiere her one-woman show about her experiences as a South Asian Muslim American woman, entitled *Me, My Mom & Sharmila Tagore*.

Yasen Peyankov

has been an ensemble member at Steppenwolf Theatre since 2002 and last appeared in *Three Sisters*. Other Steppenwolf appearances include *The Hot L Baltimore*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Lost Land*, *Cherry Orchard*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *The Time of Your Life*, *Hysteria*, *The Berlin Circle*, *Morning Star*, *The Pillowman*, *Time to Burn*, *The Tempest*, and *Superior Donuts*. Additional theater credits include *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Ivanov*, *Scenes from an Execution*, *Agamemnon*, and *Caligula* (European Repertory Company); *The Odyssey* (Goodman Theatre); *Hamlet*, *Piano*, *Twelfth Night* (Court Theatre); and *Medea* (American Theater Company). Film credits include *A Very Harold and Kumar Christmas*, *Contagion*, *Transformers 3*, *Crime Fiction*, *The Company*, *Novocaine*, *U.S. Marshals*, and *Payback*. Television credits include *The Mob Doctor*, *The Beast*, *Gifted Hands*, *Karen Sisco*, *Alias*, *Early Edition*, *The Unit*, *The Evidence*, *Numb3rs*, *E-Ring*, and others. His translation of *Chekhov's Ivanov*, produced by European Repertory Company, was published by Ivan R. Dee. He is the recipient of a Jeff Award and a Fox Fellowship

and is Head of Theatre Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he teaches acting. Peyankov is originally from Bulgaria, where he graduated from the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts.

Michael Shannon

Jeff Award-winning actor Michael Shannon began his career as a stage actor in Chicago, where he helped found A Red Orchid Theatre. He has worked with notable Chicago theater companies such as the Steppenwolf Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, and Northlight Theatre, among others. A celebrated film actor, his credits include *Pearl Harbor*, *8 Mile*, *Kangaroo Jack*, *Bug*, *Take Shelter*, *Man of Steel*, and *Revolutionary Road*, for which he received his first Academy Award nomination. Shannon has a recurring role as Nelson Van Alden on the hit HBO series *Boardwalk Empire*.

Chicago Humanities Festival

24th annual Chicago Humanities Festival
Animal: What Makes Us Human
October 13 | Evanston
October 20 | Hyde Park
November 1–10 | Downtown

The Chicago Humanities Festival has welcomed world-class artists, writers, thinkers, and performers to Chicago since 1990. By celebrating great ideas in public programs featuring creative and insightful speakers, the Festival has become a vital component of Chicago’s cultural community.

This year’s festival includes more than eighty events at venues in Evanston, and Chicago’s Lincoln Park, Loop, and Hyde Park neighborhoods, and features concerts, performances, discussions, lectures, and more. For more information and tickets, visit chicagohumanities.org or call the CHF Box Office at 312.494.9509.

Serious Smart Culture
You are always eager for new ideas and savvy cultural criticism—that’s why you attend Chicago Humanities Festival programs—but your curiosity doesn’t end when the fall Festival finishes. Make the humanities a vital and vibrant part of your daily life with CHF multimedia.

 Follow us on Twitter for a daily digest of highlights from the arts and humanities: [@chi_humanities](https://twitter.com/chi_humanities)

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 **iTunes** Take our podcast with you to the gym, on the train, and in the car. Search “Chicago Humanities Festival” on iTunes

Tackle big questions with us on the CHF blog, blog.chicagohumanities.org

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Join us for Stages, Sights & Sounds in 2014
The performance-based programming of CHF’s nationally recognized spring festival appeals to a wide audience, including children and families. The fifteenth annual Stages, Sights & Sounds festival takes place in May 2014. Please visit chicagohumanities.org for more information in early 2014.

Thank You

Lead support for the 2013–14 season of MCA Stage is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman. Additional generous support is provided by Graff, David Herro and Jay Franke, Caryn and King Harris, Lois and Steve Eisen and The Eisen Family Foundation, and Mary Ittelson. MCA Chicago is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.



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Richard Poston

As of October 2013

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

As one of the nation's largest multidisciplinary museums devoted to the art of our time, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago offers exhibitions of the most thought-provoking art of today. The museum's performing arts program, MCA Stage, is the most active presenter of theater, dance, and music in Chicago, featuring leading performers from around the globe in the 300-seat Edlis Neeson Theater.

MCA Stage is committed to presenting groundbreaking performances that focus on collaboration; working closely with artists; converging with the larger programming of the museum; and offering a contemporary view of the traditional roots of performance.

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Program notes compiled by
Yolanda Cesta Cursach

Courtesy Guidelines and Information

Parking

Validate your ticket at the coat check for \$11 parking in the MCA garage (220 East Chicago Avenue) and Bernardin garage (747 North Wabash Avenue). The \$11 parking is limited to six hours on the date of the performance.

Lost and found

To inquire about a lost item, call the museum at 312.280.2660. Unclaimed articles are held for 30 days.

Seating

Please switch off all noise-making devices while you are in the theater.

Patrons are seated at the management's discretion. Food and open beverage containers are not allowed in the seating area.

Reproduction

Unauthorized recording and reproduction of a performance is prohibited.

Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago

220 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
mcachicago.org

General information 312.280.2660

Box office 312.397.4010

Volunteer for performances
312.397.4072
mcastage@mcachicago.org

Museum hours

Tuesday: 10 am–8 pm
Wednesday–Sunday: 10 am–5 pm
Closed Mondays, Thanksgiving,
Christmas, and New Year's Day