



## **Stew & The Negro Problem**

**Saturday  
and Sunday,  
October 20  
and 21, 2012**

**Museum of  
Contemporary Art  
Chicago**

**Edlis Neeson  
Theater**

# Stew & The Negro Problem

Stew, *guitar and lead vocals*  
Michael McGinnis, *woodwinds*  
*and keyboards*  
Jeffrey Hermanson, *trumpet*  
Brian Drye, *trombone and*  
*keyboards*  
Daniel Fabricatore,  
*acoustic bass*  
Vincent Sperrazza, *drums*

The music performed tonight  
features original compositions  
by Stew and collaborator  
Heidi Rodewald, including  
commissioned songs from their  
MCA residency earlier this year.

Very special thanks to  
Marguerite Horberg, Arnold  
Romeo, Robert “Baabe” L.  
Irving III, Adam Green, Ethan  
Michaeli, Ed Marszewski, and  
James Jankowiak

# From the artists

## We Wrote Some Songs “About” Chicago

An impression is a fact verifiable only by memory and emotion. We deal in impressions. We don't trust the truth.

Tonight's tunes are snapshots of a Chicago that exists. But only in the minds of your humble court composers, Stew and Ms. Heidi Rodewald.

We not only stand by our ignorance but find it essential to our process. We would never dream of even attempting to write a song that tried to tell you an “objective truth” about this complex colossus, because frankly that's your job—you live here.

We musical tourists would rather share our subjective truths with you, our blurry snapshots of song, if you will, in hopes that maybe a fragment or two of our tuneful misunderstandings move you to laughter, reflection or sheer anger, all of which we find thoroughly acceptable.

You know you really love a town when you wish you had discovered it when you were twenty years younger. But it's never too late. **This show feels like the beginning of something.**

It's a privilege to be able to write about a place that gave birth to so much that is essential to our beings as artists, as politically engaged people and as plain old human beings . . . and as eaters of meat.

We'd like to thank Peter and Yolanda for being truly amazing people who went above and beyond the call of duty to open Chicago up for us in a way that was fun, extremely helpful and inspiring.

Sincerely,

Heidi and Stew, Brooklyn,  
Fall 2012

**MCA Stage**

**Theater**

**Mike Daisey**  
**American Utopias**  
**Nov 1–11, 2012**

Copresented with the  
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**“Mike Daisy is a force of  
nature. [He] can work  
a story deep into your  
subconscious and invite  
true insight.”**

***The Post and Courier***

For tickets, visit [mcachicago.org](http://mcachicago.org) or call 312.397.4010.

# About the artists

## Stew

lives in Brooklyn, New York, and is a native of Los Angeles, where he launched his band The Negro Problem in the early mid-1990s. He is co-creator with Heidi Rodewald of *Passing Strange*, which earned seven Tony Award nominations and the Tony Award for Best Book in 2008 as well as two Obie Awards for Best New Theater Piece and Best Ensemble. The film version of *Passing Strange*, directed by Spike Lee, was premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival. Stew and Rodewald's next collaboration, *Making It*, was premiered by St Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn, in February 2010, and was followed in October of the same year by *Brooklyn Omnibus*, which premiered at and was commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

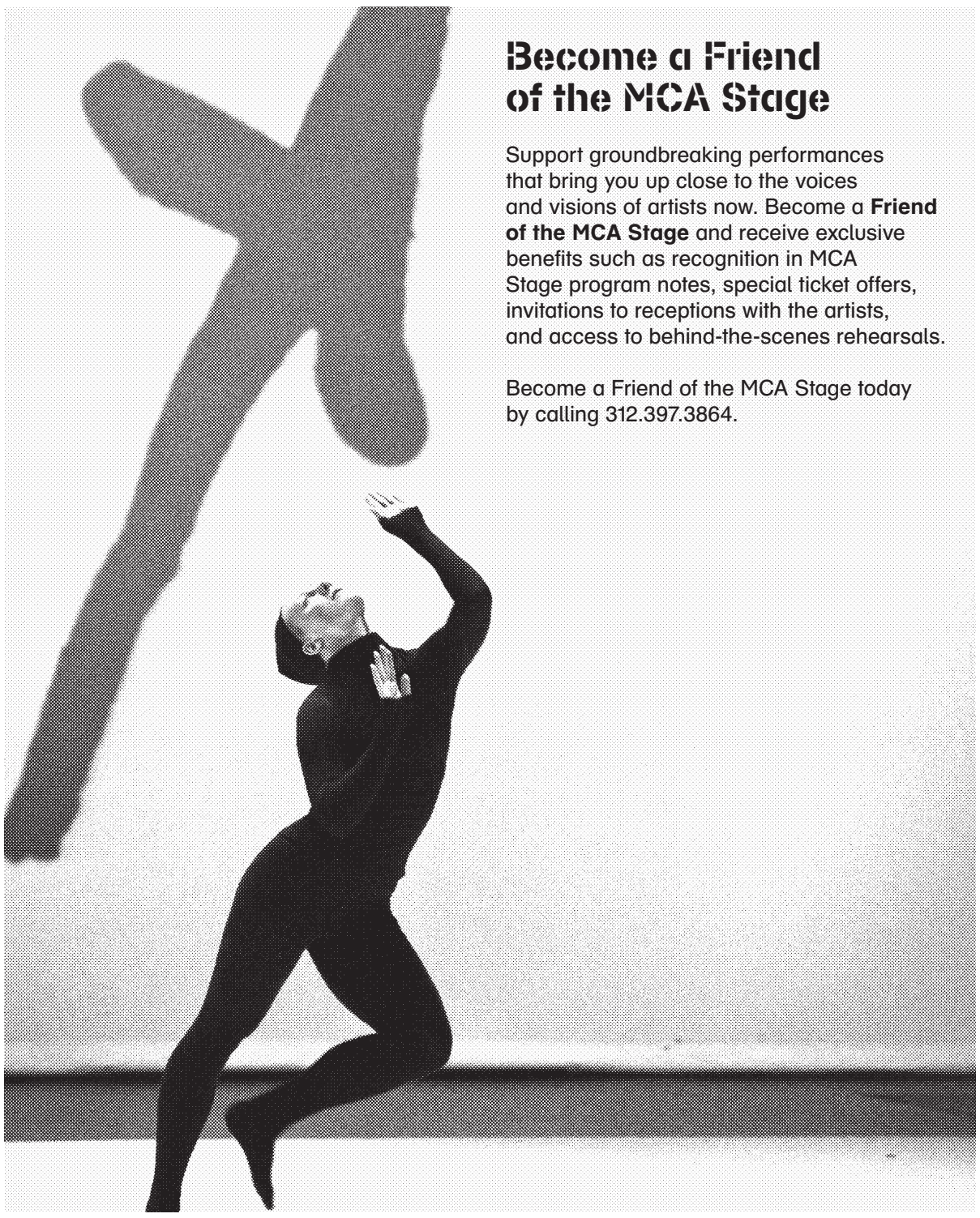
Recordings by Stew & The Negro Problem include *Post Minstrel Syndrome* (1997), *Joys and Concerns* (1999), *Guest Host* (2000), *The Naked Dutch Painter* (2002), *Welcome Black* (2002), *Something Deeper Than These Changes* (2003), cast album of *Passing Strange* (2008), and *Making It* (2012). Stew is an artist/educator who has taught and/or lectured at California Institute of the Arts, Stanford University, the University of Wisconsin Madison, The New School for Social Research, Bennington College, and many others. Stew is a Sundance Institute Alumni Advisory Board Member.

In 2003 Lincoln Center invited Stew and Rodewald to perform in the *American Songbook* series of concerts, and in March of 2009 they performed at the United Nations. Stew and Rodewald were composers in residence at Shakespeare on the Sound under former artistic director Joanna Settle from 2009 to

2012, creating original music for productions of *A Midsummernight's Dream*, *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Stew and Rodewald's compositions for television include "Gary Come Home" for the *SpongeBob SquarePants* cartoon.

## Heidi Rodewald

is the Tony Award–nominated, Obie Award–winning co-composer of the musical *Passing Strange*, which transferred from the Public Theater to Broadway in 2008. She is a Sundance Institute alum and the co-writer with Stew of the screenplay *We Can See Today*. Rodewald composed music for Karen Kandel's *Portraits: Night and Day* (2004); *Brides of the Moon* by theatrical collective The Five Lesbian Brothers (2010); and co-composed, with Stew, music for Shakespeare's *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Romeo and Juliet* (2010–12). Rodewald joined The Negro Problem in 1997, and since then has worked alongside Stew, performing, producing, arranging, and composing. She is currently working on a new musical, *The Good Swimmer*, with librettist Donna DiNovelli. She is the co-composer of the new musical *The Total Bent*, seen in workshop performances February 2012 at the Public Theater.

A black and white photograph of a person in a black jumpsuit reaching up towards a large, stylized 'X' shape on a wall. The person is in a dynamic pose, with one leg bent and arms reaching upwards. The 'X' is a large, dark, textured shape that dominates the upper left portion of the image. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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# Thank You

Generous support for the 2012–13 season of MCA Stage is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman, David Herro and Jay Franke, Caryn and King Harris, Susan and Lew Manilow, Lois and Steve Eisen and The Eisen Family Foundation, and Mary Ittelson.

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As of October 2012

# 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 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 date of 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

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

Late arrivals 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, Illinois 60611  
[mcachicago.org](http://mcachicago.org)

General information 312.280.2660

Box office 312.397.4010

Volunteer for performances  
312.397.4072  
[mcastage@mcachicago.org](mailto: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