

WINTER/SPRING SEASON

Jan 23–24	eighth blackbird <i>Hand Eye</i>
Jan 28–30	Toshiki Okada/chelfitsch <i>God Bless Baseball</i>
Feb 4 and 6–7	Ingri Fiksdal, Ingvild Langgård & Signe Becker <i>Cosmic Body</i>
Feb 11–14	Faye Driscoll <i>Thank You For Coming: Attendance</i>
Feb 18–27	Tim Etchells/Forced Entertainment <i>The Notebook, Speak Bitterness, and (In) Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare</i>
Mar 5–6	Joffrey Academy of Dance <i>Winning Works</i>
Mar 25–26	eighth blackbird, Bryce Dessner, David T. Little, and others <i>Ghostlight</i>
Mar 31–Apr 3	Blair Thomas & Co. <i>Moby Dick</i>
Apr 7–10	Teatrocinema <i>Historia de Amor (Love Story)</i>
Apr 12 and 14–16	Taylor Mac <i>The History of Popular Music</i>
Apr 28–May 1	Kyle Abraham/ Abraham.In.Motion <i>When the Wolves Came In</i>

Jan 28–30, 2016

Toshiki Okada/ chelfitsch *God Bless Baseball*

Written and directed by Toshiki Okada

Performers	Yoon Jae Lee Pijin Neji Sung Hee Wi Aoi Nozu
Recorded Voice	Jerome Young
Set Design	Tadasu Takamine
Costumes	Kyoko Fujitani (FAIFAI)
Dramaturgy	Sugatsu Kanayama (Tokatsu Sports) Hongyie Lee
Korean Translation/ Interpretation	Hongyie Lee
Stage Managers	Koro Suzuki, Tsubasa Yamashita
Assistant Stage Manager	Susumu Kumaki
Lighting Designer	Ayumi Kito
Lighting Operator	Yukie Shibata
Sound Designer	Yuji Tsutsumida (WHITELIGHT)
Sound Operator	Masahide Ando

Video Designer	Takaki Sudo
Production Manager	Tamiko Ouki (precog)
English Translation	Aya Ogawa
Japanese Surtitles (from English)	Kaku Nagashima
Surtitles operator	Eun Choi
Publicity Design	Ruka Noguchi

The performance runs approximately 100 minutes with no intermission.

Toshiki Okada's *God Bless Baseball* US tour is funded by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan in the fiscal year 2015, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, The Japan Foundation through the *Performing Arts JAPAN* Program, and the Asian Cultural Council. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.



God Bless Baseball is commissioned by Asian Culture Complex-Asian Arts Theatre; coproduced by Asian Culture Complex-Asian Arts Theatre, Festival/Tokyo, and Taipei Arts Festival; additional commissioning support provided by FringeArts, Philadelphia; Japan Society, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland; and Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University. Research and workshop support by Doosan Art Center in cooperation with Kinoshita International Arts Center, Steep Slope Studio, and Sample.

God Bless Baseball made its world premiere at the Opening Festival of the Asian Culture Complex-Asian Arts Theatre in Gwangju, South Korea, in September 2015. The production made its Japan premiere at Owlspot in Tokyo, presented as part of Festival/Tokyo in November 2015.

The MCA gratefully acknowledges Japan Society for assisting in compiling program notes for this presentation.

ARTISTS UP CLOSE

MCA Stage's series of artist-centered talks, workshops, and open studios engages the public with the artists in intimate settings and provides a closer look at the creative process. Join us today.

MCA TALK

Jan 28

Following the performance, audience members are invited to stay for a moderated conversation with the ensemble.

Thanks go to the League of Chicago Theatres for connecting the Chicago community and Toshiki Okada in conversation, as well as in a physical-theater workshop led by the writer/director. The League provides many vital opportunities for visiting artists to meet and interact with members of Chicago's vibrant performing arts community throughout the year and all over the city.

The MCA presents Toshiki Okada/chelfitsch as a part of IN>TIME Festival, celebrating contemporary performance in partnership with the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, defibrillator, the Illinois Humanities Council, Links Hall/Constellation, 6018North, The Poetry Center, Roosevelt University, Threewalls, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

SYNOPSIS

Baseball was reportedly introduced into Japan in 1873 and Korea in 1904. Over the course of more than 100 years, the game has solidly taken root in both countries and become deeply intertwined with society and people's lives. The play proceeds through a sequence of various baseball-related scenes. We meet women who do not know the rules of the game very well, a man who came to hate baseball because



Toshiki Okada
Photo: Nobutaka Sato

of a traumatic childhood experience, and then a baseball-loving woman who, by some twist of fate, ends up marrying that man. Historical figure Ichiro Suzuki (the Japanese outfielder who broke the long-standing record for the most single-season hits in the US big leagues) and others bound up with baseball appear as characters, along with personal and national memories. The work also portrays exploits of and anecdotes about Korean and Japanese baseball players who made their marks on the US major leagues.

Eventually, the story squarely faces the larger issue of the United States, which has had and continues to have a tremendous influence on both Japan and Korea. The United States of America is at once above, behind, inside, and with us. Can't we somehow build a relationship with this huge power of influence that differs from that of the present?

— Toshiki Okada

FROM THE ARTIST

God Bless Baseball is a collaborative work between Koreans and Japanese, and it is the first production for me as a theater director to work with non-Japanese-speaking actors.

In September 2015, the Asian Arts Theatre, one part of a giant cultural complex, opened in Gwangju, South Korea. The conception of this work began when Ms. Seonghee Kim, director of the Theatre, requested that I create a piece to be featured in the lineup of the Opening Festival of the Asian Arts Theatre, which serves as a hub for Asian arts, a national mission of Korea. In response to Kim's request, I said that I wanted to take this chance to challenge myself to create a Japanese-Korean collaborative work.

What I wanted to address through this production was the relationship between Korea and Japan and both countries' positions within the international state of affairs.

Furthermore, I wanted to ask: "If we could constructively change the current situation even slightly by using our imagination, what kind of imagination would we possibly use?"

For these two countries there remain serious and unresolved issues brought upon by Japan's thirty-five-year colonization of the Korean Peninsula for in the first half of the twentieth century. Even today, these issues continue to significantly affect the relationship between both countries. It is not as though I am evading these historic issues, but rather taking my own approach; I, as a Japanese artist, wanted to not only capture the current situation in which contemporary Koreans and/or Japanese live but also envisage our possible future.

To bring these ideas to life, I decided that the subject matter of this collaborative piece would be America, the nation that molds the states of Japan and Korea and still hugely influences each country culturally as well as politically. And I chose the sport of baseball, which thrives in both Korea and Japan, as a tool to paint this theme.

As children are taught to play catch by their fathers, both Japan and Korea have been taught baseball by America. What comes to light when one views the States as a parent and Japan and Korea as brothers?

People in Japan and Korea cannot ignore the American



God Bless Baseball
Image: Ruka Noguchi

influence in their lives. My play positions the United States as parent and Japan and Korea as brothers who are heavily influenced by that parent. It weaves notions and images that come to the surface from episodic narratives revolving around the baseball culture shared by all three nations.

At the same time, the play describes the realities of contemporary society in Japan and Korea, while taking up issues such as the presence of US military bases in both countries and the draft in Korea.

God Bless Baseball is performed by two Japanese and three Korean actors who are not in my chelitsch ensemble. The Japanese actors play Koreans roles, and the Korean actors, Japanese roles. The scenes about Japanese are related in Korean, and those about Koreans, in Japanese. The actors' baseball-related memories and our ensuing communications were integral in the work's creation.

I am extremely curious about how this piece will be perceived by an American audience.

—Toshiki Okada

Feb 4 and 6-7
at MCA Stage

Ingri Fiksdal, Ingvild Langgård & Signe Becker



Sam Pratt, Catherine Ellis Kirk
Photo: Tim Barden

Cosmic Body

Tickets at mcchicago.org

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

KYOKO FUJITANI

was born in 1981 and is a costume designer for the theater company FAIFAI. Fujitani collages items from unique areas, eras, and genres. In addition to working with theater and dance, Fujitani is also involved in workshops, film, TV, and live performances by musicians. She has also worked with artists including Teppei Kaneuji.

SUGATSU KANAYAMA

began work on artistic projects with his theater unit, Tokatsu Sports, in 2008. In addition to staging theatrical performances, Kanayama has participated in events such as Azumabashi Dance Crossing and X-Point. His works are known for their genre-defying sound samples, and lines delivered in the style of rap. Kanayama appears in some of his own productions as a DJ/VJ. Drawing heavily on hip-hop culture and infusing elements of cynicism, he has built a unique place for himself in the contemporary theater scene.

HONGYIE LEE

is a member of the Korean creative theater company DIRECTUR42. Foreign plays that she has translated into Korean include *I was Punched for Sticking Out Slightly*, *Rai-Rai-Rai-Rai-Rai*, *Outer World*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Shonen B*, *The Devotion of Suspect X*, and *Remote Backwater Island*, among others. As a dramaturge, Lee

has been involved in works including the opera *As If the Moon Slithered on the Surface of the Water*, which won the second Eddily Culture Award Grand Prix for Extraordinary Production, and the play *Karumegi*, which won the fiftieth East Asian Theater Award Production Award.

YOON JAE LEE

was born in 1972 and graduated from the Seoul Institute of the Arts. In addition to the works he creates for his own company, Lee has performed in a number of Japanese productions such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Kamome*, directed by Japanese director Junnosuke Tada (founder of Tokyo Deathlock theater company), and *Electra*, directed by Tadashi Suzuki. Following his performance of Kiwoong Sung's *One Day of the Novelist*, *Mr. Kubo*, Lee became a member of the 12th Tongue Theatre Studio.

PIJIN NEJI

performed as a member of the acclaimed *butoh* company Dairakudakan from 2000 to 2004. After leaving Dairakudakan, Neji began his career as an independent choreographer/dancer. He is a recipient of the Yokohama Dance Collection Jury Prize, and his work *the acting motivation*, an autobiographical documentary based on his own experience working part-time, won the Festival/Tokyo F/T AWARD.

AOI NOZU

was born in Tokyo in 1995 and began her acting career while a student at university.

Toshiki Okada
God Bless Baseball
 Photo: Asian
 Arts Theatre
 (Moon So Young)



In 2008, Nozu performed in Shu Matsui's Sample theater company production *Kazoku no Shouzou* and became a member of the company in 2011. Nozu has performed in *Hi no Kao* (Festival Tokyo, 2009), written by Marius von Mayenburg and directed by Shu Matsui; *The Treasured Son* (2012), written and directed by Shu Matsui; and *Invisible Neighbors* (2014), written and directed by Kaori Nishi.

TOSHIKI OKADA

was born in Yokohama in 1973 and formed the chelfitsch theater company in 1997. Since then, Okada has written and directed all of the company's productions, practicing a distinctive methodology for creating plays, known for their hyper-colloquial texts and exaggerated commonplace gestures.

His play *Five Days in March* (2004), which was presented by MCA Stage in 2009, won the 2005 Kunio Kishida Drama Award and the same year earned Okada the Yokohama Cultural Award/Yokohama

Award for Art and Cultural Encouragement. His work *Air Conditioner* (2005) was a finalist for the Toyota Choreography Award, garnering attention not only from the theater but also from the contemporary dance community. In 2006, Okada took part in the Stueck International Literature Project as a representative of Japan, and in December of that year he created *Enjoy*, commissioned and presented by New National Theatre, Tokyo.

In 2007, Okada's collection of novels *The End of the Special Time We Were Allowed* (*Watashitachi ni Yurusareta Tokubetsu na Jikan no Owari*) was published; it included the novel version of *Five Days in March* and his first novel, *Our Many Places* (*Watashitachi no Basho no Fukusu*). This collection was awarded the Kenzaburo Oe Prize in the following year. In addition to working on projects by other artists—such as *Three Women* for director Naoto Takenaka (2008) and directing *Tattoo* (*Taetowierung*) written by German playwright Dea Loher

for New National Theatre, Tokyo (2009)—Okada continues to write and direct plays for his theater company, including *Freetime* (2008, cocommissioned by KUNSTEN-FESTIVALDESARTS, Brussels, Wiener Festwochen, Vienna and The Festival d'Automne à Paris), *We Are the Undamaged Others* (2010), and *The Sonic Life of A Giant Tortoise* (2011).

Okada's US production of *Enjoy* was directed by Dan Rothenberg and produced/presented by The Play Company in New York in 2010. Ensuing US tours have included *Hot Pepper*, *Air Conditioner*, and the Farewell Speech in 2012 presented by the Japan Society as part of The Public Theater's Under The Radar Festival; *Zero Cost House*, a collaborative work by Okada and Dan Rothenberg, presented by the Live Arts Festival, Philadelphia, also in 2012; and *The Sonic Life of a Giant Tortoise*, produced/presented by The Play Company at JACK in 2014.

In recent years, Okada has also earned attention widely in the visual arts, with exhibitions at international art centers and museums. His plays continue to be published in Japan and translated into many languages. Recently the Munich Kammerspiele, one of the foremost theaters in Germany, invited Okada to direct his works in the Kammerspiele's repertory program for three seasons starting in 2016.

TADASU TAKAMINE
 was born in Kagoshima

Prefecture in 1968 and currently lives in Shiga Prefecture. He studied at the Kyoto City University of Arts and the Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences (IAMAS). Takamine was a longtime member of the influential Japanese multimedia performance group Dumb Type, and is internationally active in the visual arts, creating installations, video works, photography, and performances that address social issues. His recent museum solo exhibitions include *Good House*, *Nice Body* (2010, Kanazawa 21st Century Museum), which deals with issues surrounding the rise in cookie-cutter houses; *Too Far to See* (Ikon Gallery, UK; Yokohama Museum; Hiroshima Contemporary Museum; and Kirishima Open-Air Museum); and *Tadasu Takamine's Cool Japan* (2012, Art Tower Mito), which focused on the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster. Takamine has also been active in the field of performing arts as a director as well as a collaborator. He teaches visual art as an adjunct professor at Akita University of Arts. Takamine's acclaimed video *God Bless America* (2002) inspired the title of Okada's new work *God Bless Baseball*.

SUNG HEE WI

was born in 1984 and majored in philosophy and minored in theater at Daegin University. Wi's work *Dry Monologue*, which she began in 2011, has been presented at four venues and festivals. She performed in *form form* directed by Kyung Ae Ro, which was selected as



God Bless Baseball
Image: Ruka Noguchi

a New Arts Trend by the Seoul Arts Foundation in 2012, and in *Decoding Movement*, selected as a Young Art Frontier by the Arts Council Korea in 2013. Wi also works as a dancer and choreographer.

JEROME YOUNG

was born in the Chicago area, moved to Japan in 1994, and currently resides in the seaside town Zushi, Kanagawa. He has

graduate degrees from Temple University and The University of Warwick and is now an instructor at Keio University. Young conducts research in psychopathology and has published many articles in various academic journals. As a singer-songwriter, he has released two full-length albums to date and is developing a blues music project planned for release in 2016.

Feb 18-27
at MCA Stage

Tim Etchells/ Forced Entertainment



Tim Etchells/*Forced Entertainment, Speak Bitterness*
Photo: Hugo Glendinning

The Notebook, Speak Bitterness, and (In) Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare

Tickets at mcachicago.org

The MCA's newest affinity group, **Enact**, gives longtime performance fans and newcomers alike the opportunity to meet artists, discuss ground-breaking directions with leading curators, and choose key performers to sponsor.

Join Enact, a group of MCA Circle Donors dedicated to supporting and learning more about the renowned programs on the MCA Stage. Membership in Enact enhances your MCA experience by offering you backstage access to artists and insider information about our programs and the current state of the field.

Each year, Enact members choose—through discussion and voting—one performance to sponsor, thereby increasing the impact MCA Stage programming has on the community.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF ENACT MEMBERSHIP INCLUDE:

- Members-only programming throughout the MCA Stage season
- Pre and post-performance discussions with artists
- Behind-the-scenes access to select rehearsals
- An annual preview of the upcoming season
- Recognition as the Enact Sponsor of a select program
- All benefits of Circle Donors

Enact dues: \$1,000 annually
Circle Donor contribution: From \$1,500 annually

For more information, contact us at enact@mcachicago.org.

FOUNDING MEMBERS OF ENACT:

Dr. Bruce and Sally Bauer
Julie and Shane Campbell
Patricia O. Cox
Shawn M. Donnelley*
and Christopher M. Kelly
Lois** and Steve Eisen and
The Eisen Family Foundation
Ginger Farley and Bob Shapiro
David Herro and Jay Franke
Sarai Hoffman and Stephen Pratt
Rhona Hoffman
Cynthia Hunt and Philip Rudolph
Mary E. Ittelson
Anne Kaplan
Anne and John Kern
Lisa Yun Lee
Elizabeth A. Liebman
Susan Manning and Doug Doetsch
Herbert R. and Paula Molner
Sharon and Lee Oberlander
Maya Polsky
Carol Prins and John Hart/
The Jessica Fund
Elizabeth Price and Lou Yecies
Carol Prins and John Hart/
The Jessica Fund
Mr. and Mrs. John Seder
Ms. Patricia F. Sternberg
Ellen Stone Belic
Richard and Ann Tomlinson

THANK YOU

Lead support for the 2015-16 season of MCA Stage is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman.

Generous support for MCA Dance is provided by David Herro and Jay Franke. Additional generous support is provided by Caryn and King Harris, and Lois and Steve Eisen and the Eisen Family Foundation.

The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.



Foundation
Season Sponsor



Preferred
Hotel Partner



The MCA is a
proud partner
of the National
Performance
Network

FRIENDS OF MCA STAGE

\$10,000-24,999

Shawn M. Donnelley and
Christopher M. Kelly
Lois and Steve Eisen and The
Eisen Family Foundation
Ginger Farley and Bob Shapiro

\$5,000-9,999

Ellen Stone Belic
Pamela Crutchfield
The Irving Harris Foundation
The Martha Struthers Farley
and Donald C. Farley Jr.
Family Foundation
Sharon and Lee Oberlander
Maya Polsky
Carol Prins and John Hart/
The Jessica Fund

\$1,000-4,999

Amphion Foundation, Inc.
Leigh and Henry Bienen
Melynda Lopin
Maecenas
Herbert R. and Paula Molner
Elizabeth Price and Lou Yecies
Mr. and Mrs. John Seder
Ms. Patricia F. Sternberg

\$500-999

Julie and Shane Campbell
Cynthia Hunt and Philip Rudolph
Anonymous

Museum of
Contemporary Art
Chicago

220 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611

As of January 2016

* Enact Chair
**Enact Cochair

As an internationally renowned institution devoted to contemporary culture, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago presents the most thought-provoking visual art and performing arts of our time. MCA Stage is a vibrant series presenting theater, dance, and music by leading artists from the United States and around the world in the MCA's three-hundred-seat Edlis Neeson Theater.

MCA Stage's groundbreaking performances are an integral part of MCA Chicago's artist-activated, audience-engaged programming. Along with the museum's exhibitions and educational initiatives, they encourage a broad and diverse community to experience and discuss the work and ideas of living artists.

PARKING

Validate your ticket at the coat check for \$12 parking in the MCA garage (220 East Chicago Avenue) or the Bernardin garage (747 North Wabash). Discounted parking is limited to six hours on the date of performance.

LOST AND FOUND

To inquire about a lost item, call the museum at 312-280-2660. Unclaimed articles are held for thirty 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.

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

Anne Kaplan, Chair of
the Board of
Trustees
Madeleine Grynstejn,
Pritzker Director
Teresa Samala
de Guzman, Deputy
Director
Michael Darling,
James W. Alsdorf
Chief Curator

PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS

Peter Taub, Director
Yolanda Cesta Cursach,
Associate Director
John Rich, Manager
Isabel Dieppa,
Coordinator
Richard Norwood,
Theater
Production
Manager
Meghan Claire
Coppoletti, Intern
Udita Upadhyaya, Intern

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

Kevin Brown, Associate
Phill Cabeen, Associate
Quinlan Kirchner,
Associate

BOX OFFICE

Matti Allison, Manager
Phongtorn Phongluantum,
Assistant Manager
Molly Laemle,
Coordinator
Lucas Baisch, Associate
Stephanie Branco,
Associate
Nora Carroll, Associate
Emma Dwyer, Associate
Wright Gatewood,
Associate
Julie Kriegel, Associate
Laura Volkening, Associate

Program notes compiled by
Yolanda Cesta Cursach

**MCA
CHIC
AGO**