

FALL SEASON

Sep 19

Tanya Tagaq
Nanook of the North

Sep 27

Roscoe Mitchell
Trios

Oct 16-17

George Lewis,
Catherine Sullivan,
Sean Griffin
Afterword, an Opera

Oct 22-25

Niv Sheinfeld/Oren
Laor and Same
Planet Different World

Oct 27-28

Annie Dorsen
Spokaoke

Nov 6-8

Guillermo Calderón
Escuela (School)

Nov 12-14

Gisèle Vienne,
Dennis Cooper, and
Puppentheater Halle
*The Ventriloquists
Convention*

Dec 19-20

Tatsu Aoki/
Tsukasa Taiko
*Taiko Legacy 12
Reduction*

Museum of
Contemporary Art
Chicago

Dec 19, 2015

Tsukasa Taiko

Reduction

Copresented with Asian Improv aRts Midwest

Directed and produced by Tatsu Aoki

Shamisen	Grandmaster Chizuru Kineya
Shakuhachi/bamboo flute	Grandmaster Kizan Kawamura
Taiko	SHINTA
Hand drum	Takane Umeya
Flute	Nicole Mitchell
Woodwinds	Douglas R. Ewart
	Ari Brown
	Francis Wong
Percussion	Michael Zerang
	Hamid Drake
Taiko	Eigen Aoki
	Melody Takata and Gen Ensemble
Dance and Choreography	Grandmaster Shunojo Fujima, Fujima Ryu of Chicago
Dance	Yoshinojo Fujima, Fujima Ryu of Chicago
Dance	Erin Ikeuchi, Fujima Ryu of Chicago
Dance and Choreography	Ayako Kato
Electronics and Violin	Jonathan Chen
Mask in Ayako Kato performance created by Gwendolyn Terry	

TSUKASA TAIKO
GINTENKAI UNIT

Eigen Aoki*
Kioto Aoki
Miyumi Aoki
Kiyomi Negi
Kenji Negi
Koji Negi
Jun Takanarita
Mark Aburano-Meister
Noriko Sugiyama

*alumnus

GEN ENSEMBLE
(GENRYU ARTS SF)

Brian Ebisuzaki
Megan Lee
Wesley Hitomo Yee
Jeddie Kawahatsu
Kelly Lem
Kanon Myo
Lakambini O'Donnell
Melody Mitsuru Sugai
Kara Wong
Taryn Wong

PRODUCTION

Lenora Lee (Asian Improv aRts SF)
Joan Ambo (Fujima Ryu of Chicago)
Yukiko Aoki
Joyce Ashizawa-Yee (GenRyu Arts SF)
Steven Ducklow
Gail Itokazu
Jane Mulhall
Rika Sato-James
Joanne Kiyoko Tohei
Bradley Yee (GenRyu Arts SF)
Kay Kawaguchi (Fujima Ryu of
Chicago)
Cameron Hadley (GenRyu Arts SF)
Kenjo Wong (Asian Improv aRts SF)

ADMINISTRATION

Executive Producer and Artistic Director	Tatsu Aoki
Director of Development	Jeff Chan
Director of Outreach and Education	Joanne Kiyoko Tohei
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Tsukasa Taiko at JASC (Japan American Service Committee)	
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MCA
CHIC
AGO



Asian Improv aRts Midwest
AIRMW

WELCOME

Wow, thank the lucky gods! We proudly copresent with MCA Stage *Reduction* in its third installment of *taiko* art.

The first *Reduction* and the sequel recognized an alternative, or flip side, to the significance of applied taiko performance. The guest artists and advanced players of Gintenkai, Tsukasa Taiko's national unit named after the original troupe in Tokyo, experiment with the taiko form, creating an ideal contrast to our perennial family favorite, the *Taiko Legacy* series.

I am honored and delighted to share two new CD releases on the occasion of *Reduction 3: Melody Takata's Pages* and Ari Brown and Francis Wong's *Needs are Met*.

Reduction is a creative response to the popular taiko drumming stripped of its musical elements. In the past half century, ensemble taiko (*kumi-daiko*) has evolved for the North American and European markets as drumming that is played hard and fast and uses multiple rhythmic and pattern-oriented movements, in contrast to more nuanced taiko used in other Japanese art forms. The essential difference lies in musicality. *Reduction* argues for upholding the beauty in taiko performance, for its connectivity to aesthetics and musicality.

Our focus at Tsukasa Taiko is on "performativities": the mechanism that intertwines performance and music in Asian American culture. Without diminishing the power of the drum's image, as our musical mentors say and our dancers do, we "strike the music and dance the drums." The emphasis is movement as move-*meant*, with great attention paid to our musical and physical dialogues. We also apply the components of our original taiko compositions—space, silence, time, weight, and movement—to connect the sense of beauty and value inherent in performing Japanese-ness and music.

I admit some distress with the reductive tendencies of taiko. The marketing of this popular form of drumming erodes wider understandings of Asian American's complex historical and cultural practices.

The vision for *Reduction* stems from the Gintenkai live arts group that I helped start, and which emerged out of experiments across the theater, music, film, and literature of 1960s and 1970s Japan. Gintenkai was extraordinarily fortunate to have some of our greatest influences regularly visit rehearsals

and advise our creative process: Kobo Abe (1924–1993), the writer, playwright, photographer, and inventor often compared to Franz Kafka; Shuji Terayama (1935–1983), poet, dramatist, film director, and photographer; Susumu Hani (b. 1928), Hiroshi Teshigahara (1927–2001), and Masahiro Shinoda (b. 1931) film directors-writers and among the most prominent representatives of the 1960s Japanese New Wave; and Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996), the composer and writer on aesthetics and music theory, who was largely self-taught and possessed consummate skill in the subtle manipulation of instrumental timbre. These are just a few of our influences.

The same ideals fuel Tsukasa Taiko: in embracing a new wave of artists we master traditional taiko, and by blurring the divide between past and present, we move the culture forward. We are also reconnecting taiko's performative and musical possibilities by inviting many different creative musicians and dancers, some trained in traditional forms and all proficient improvisers, including Douglas R. Ewart, Francis Wong, Nicole Mitchell, Hamid Drake, Ari Brown, Jonathan Chen, Michael Zerang, Melody Takata, SHINTA, and Eigen Aoki, along with grandmasters Chizuru Kineya (*shamisen*), Takane Umeya (hand drum), Kizan Kawamura (bamboo flute), as well as kimono grandmaster artist Shunojo Fujima and contemporary dancer Ayako Kato.

For the past two plus decades, I have infused my repertoire with this approach to staging performances for Tsukasa Taiko as well as my own music creations and film works. *Reduction* is a fabulous outgrowth of my deliberate aesthetic. The prolific scene of 1970s Tokyo could not imagine the reinterpretations of those works created now by the Chicago and Bay Area artists performing in *Reduction*. MCA Stage has been my most influential collaborator since 1996.

Our reimagining and innovating of taiko would also not be possible without our affiliate unit in San Francisco, GenRyu Art, and you, our attentive and curious public. We invite you to the celebration.

Tatsu Aoki
Executive Producer
and Artistic Director
Tsukasa Taiko

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.

FIRST NIGHT

Dec 19

Following the performance, audience members are invited to stay for a conversation with Tatsu Aoki and collaborators, moderated by Yolanda Cesta Cursach, Associate Director of Performance Programs.

MCA SCREEN

Tatsu Aoki, *formalism, structuralism, and reduction*

On December 15, Tatsu Aoki, who has been creating experimental films for more than thirty years, introduced selections from his lesser-seen 16 mm films and presented the Chicago premiere of his digital work *Pages*. Jonathan Chen, on electronics, and Jamie Kempfers, on cello, accompanied the screenings, creating a live soundscape and improvised music. The sum of Aoki's massive filmography is an abstract visual journey of space and time that creates a singular world of waiting and pursuing. His body of minimalist and structuralist films gives shape to his belief in a spiritual paradise that is serene and simple yet full of change and chance.

Shape (1996)

9 minutes, 16 mm

Aoki says about the film: "Shape has to do with the shape [that] is fixed . . . and the other shape, which moves, like the lights, water, and shadow. Once again, I try to prove in my filmmaking, as in my experimental performance work, that it is impossible to see 'nothing happening' in our view of life. Everything is happening: the traveling light of the projector, grains of the film, dust, patterns, movement, etc. *Shape* takes one of the simplest shooting angles to show the most complex moments of our daily life."

Hallway (1985)

9 minutes, 16 mm

In this work, Aoki applies his approach to music performance

to the building up of meditative space as layered images of real life, in real time. He says about creating the film "I was able to do a good rendition of this concept with live sound and music but having quite difficult time identifying the visual experience with this idea of "building up." *Hallway* expresses the concept using the architecture of my hallway and experimenting with multiple exposure of lights, space, and time."

Waiting Room (1985)

14 minutes, 16 mm

In a generic waiting room setting, with the camera relocated only a few times, daylight fades and the reflection on the glass door entrance becomes increasingly grainy, until "we are no longer inside, nor have we passed entirely through the door to the outside world; instead we are left to inhabit another space—the room inside the *Waiting Room*." For Aoki, the expressive film is "an aesthetic about waiting. The value of precious moments is inherent to my upbringing. This is one of the most Japanese films I have made."

Gate (2009)

22 minutes, digital print

A study of structure, moving space, time, and pictures, this cinematic collage with photography depicts the raised train tracks of downtown Chicago. It locates beauty in functional architecture and in the durational experience of viewing moving pictures.

Pages (2015)

16 minutes, digital print

Aoki's newest digital work, *Pages*, which premiered this October at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, was created in collaboration with taiko musician Melody Takata, dance grandmaster Shunojo Fujima, saxophonist Francis Wong, and taiko player Kioto Aoki. It was initially a live performance and was inspired by the 1926 film *A Page of Madness*, directed by Teinosuke Kinugasa and based on the book by Nobel Prize-winning author Yasunari Kawabata's (1899–1972). Audacious in vision and powerfully filmed, *A Page of Madness* is the story of a retired sailor who takes a job as a janitor in a lunatic asylum to look after his insane wife, who was locked away after attempting to drown their child. Aoki's digital homage is a meditation on the emergence of Japanese modernist and experimentalist art movements.

ABOUT THE WORK

"URAJI – MONDAN"

It's been said that Miles Davis was the first jazz musician to face away from the audience when performing, and Gintenkai was probably the first taiko ensemble to turn their backs to the audience. This is the literal physical embodiment of the concept of *Uraji*. It is not necessarily what one sees that drives the soul. Featuring Ayako Kato.

"GO SHAKU SANZUN"

Shaku and *sun* (zun) are units of a traditional Japanese measurement system. This translates to about seventy-nine inches in length. The song was made to commemorate the height of the door to the warehouse where Gintenkai used to rehearse. The ceiling of the space had a very interesting wood structure. The beams appeared convoluted and quite chaotic in their layout. This layered appearance inspired the structure of this work.

"HANA HACHIJO/MI. YA. KE."

Prelude. The drumming styles developed on Hachijo Island are varied and distinct. Dance arrangement by Melody Takata.

The classic *kumi-daiko* song "Miyake" (1820) originated from Miyake Island's traditional drumming. It is a popular song that has been incorporated into many taiko groups' repertoires. Tsukasa Taiko adds choreography by Fujima Yoshinojo, and features Takane Umeya and Grandmaster Chizuru Kineya.

"OBI"

The work represents the relationship between practical and spiritual applications of articles of clothing. Both the original Obi and Yanagimachi pieces were performed in a temple. Tsukasa Taiko re-creates the two performances onstage as close to their original form in the late 1970s. Featuring artists Nicole Mitchell and Kizan Kawamura.

"YANAGIMACHI – THE ORIGINAL"

In this signature piece Gintenkai employs taiko as a tool of sound and body movement and underscore orchestral concepts within the music. It is inspired by Kabuki dance and has become an established part of Tokyo drumming since the beginning of the *Kumi-daiko* era. It is performed in full length.

"THE TRIAL – FINALE"

This re-creation of the schematic taiko work follows the graphic notation of the original to map concept and texture. The performance, however, is fully improvised. The work is inspired by the eponymous novel by Franz Kafka and the 1962 film by Orson Welles. Featured artists Ari Brown and Francis are joined by Eigen Aoki, SHINTA, Douglas R. Ewart, Michael Zerang, and Hamid Drake.

WHAT IS TAIKO?

Often used in Japan to refer to any kind of drum, *taiko* is recognized across the world for its highly stylized, choreographed performances that produce a thunderous sound. Rooted in a 2000-year history of Japanese court, theater, and ceremonial, folk, and festival music, taiko was originally performed in multi-instrument ensembles before undergoing a major evolution in the mid-twentieth-century with the emergence of all-drum ensembles. This new style, *kumi-daiko*, which roughly translates to "drum collection," has since enjoyed wide popularity, particularly in the United States, where it has become a celebrated symbol of cultural heritage for the Japanese American community.



Kioto Aoki, Ayako Kato, Precious Jennings
Photo: Ken Carl

In 1998, Tatsu Aoki first fused taiko and visual art with an expanded solo improvisation concert at MCA Stage. The performance featured Aoki on double bass, taiko master John Sagami, Paul Kim on *buk* (Korean drum), and a slide montage of *suminagashi* (the ancient Asian technique of painting on water) works by artist Amy Lee Segami. Aoki's debut of *Taiko Legacy* at MCA Stage in 2003 was part of US-JAPAN 150, commemorating the 150th anniversary of modern American-Japanese relations, and the first and largest taiko concert of its kind. For the eleventh anniversary of *Taiko Legacy*, and its ninth copresentation with MCA Stage, Tsukasa Taiko continues its expansion of the form by combining solo and large taiko ensemble performance with traditional court music, jazz improvisation, and traditional and contemporary pan-Asian dance.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

EIGEN AOKI

started his taiko career at age four on the stage of the Japan American Service Committee's annual Holiday Delight. He joined Tsukasa Taiko as a teen, eventually becoming a soloist in Gintenkai, the national unit of Tsukasa Taiko's advanced players. He has shared the stage as soloist with Mwata Bowden, Nicole Mitchell, Dohee Lee, Hamid Drake, Michael Zerang, and others, with appearances at Chicago Jazz Festival, Taste of Chicago, the Dusable Museum of African American History, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

TATSU AOKI

is a leading advocate for the Asian American community, a prolific composer and performer of traditional and experimental music forms, as well as a filmmaker and an educator. He was born in Tokyo in 1957 to Toyaki Moto, an artisan family proficient in Okiya, the tradition of working as booking and training agents for geisha in downtown Tokyo. Starting at the age of four, Aoki was part of his family performance crew and received the essence of traditional Tokyo geisha cultural training and studies, which combine history with creativity. In the late 1960s—upon Tokyo's economic and social decline, which forced many traditional family businesses to close, and with his grandmother's passing—

he shifted his training to American pop and experimental music. By the early 1970s, Aoki was active in Tokyo's underground arts movement as a member of Gintenkai, an experimental ensemble that combined traditional music and new Western forms. In the same period, he started his work in small-gauge and experimental films, influenced by his biological father, who was a movie producer at Shinto Studio.

In 1977, Aoki left Tokyo to study experimental filmmaking at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he is an adjunct full professor in the Film, Video, and New Media Department and teaches film production and history. He also is a visiting professor at Northwestern University. He has produced more than thirty experimental films and is one of the most in-demand performers of bass, shamisen, and taiko, having contributed more than ninety recording projects and touring internationally during the last twenty-five years. Aoki is Founder and Artistic Director of Chicago Asian American Jazz Festival, which observed its twentieth year in 2015. Named President of San Francisco-based Asian Improv Records (AIR) in 1999, he has managed or produced more than forty AIR albums, notably the Max Roach and Jon Jang collaboration *The Beijing Trio*, and several projects in the hip-hop and Asian Pacific American arts arenas, including film screenings and concert series.



Hamid Drake
Photo: Ken Carl

Aoki was named one of 2001's "Chicagoans of the year" by the *Chicago Tribune* for his music and has performed with music masters such as Roscoe Mitchell, Don Moye, pipa virtuoso Wu Man, and the late Chicago legend Fred Anderson. Aoki's *ROOTED: Origins of Now*, a four-movement suite for big band, premiered in 2001 at Ping Tom Memorial Park, and was performed at the Chicago Jazz Festival and at MCA Stage as part of Chicago Asian American Jazz Festival. Additional notable releases include *Basser Live* (1999) and *Basser Live II* (2005), recorded live at the MCA; *The MIYUMI Project* (2000); *Symphony of Two Cities* (2002); and *Posture of Reality* (2003) with Wu Man. The Asian American Institute awarded Aoki the Milestone Award in 2007 for his contribution to Chicago-area arts, and in 2010, he received the Japan America Society of

Chicago's Cultural Achievement Award as well as a 3Arts Artist Award. He received the Living in our Culture Award from the Japanese American Service Committee in 2014 and Jazz Heroes Award from the National Jazz Journalist Association in 2015.

ARI BROWN

is a multi-reedist and pianist, whose technique and traditional jazz chops are highly expressive across his instruments, and a dynamic and important member of the Chicago avant-garde jazz scene. Brown has performed all over the world, touring with Elvin Jones, and working with such musicians as McCoy Tyner, Don Patterson, Sonny Stitt, Lester Bowie, Bobby Watson, and Anthony Braxton. He has been part of Kahil El'Zabar's Ritual Trio and is the go-to saxophonist for Orbert Davis's Chicago Jazz Philharmonic.

JONATHAN CHEN

is a composer, instrumentalist and sound artist. In his electronic work he investigates the thick layering of fluctuating sounds produced through multiple feedback systems, and at other times the minimal amplification of the human voice, such as his installation *Amplified* (2010). As a violinist and violist, his improvisation work often emphasizes timbre rather than pitch, either drawing from a wide palette, or honing in on a single sound. Chen has a PhD in Electronic Arts from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York; a Master of Arts in Music Composition from Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT; and a Master of Music in Violin Performance from Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. His work has been published by *Leonardo Music Journal* (MIT Press), the Deep Listening Institute, Asian Improv Records, Interval, and Striking Mechanism, among others.

HAMID DRAKE

is a Chicago-based jazz drummer and percussionist who frequently tours internationally. His earliest collaboration was with legendary Chicago tenor saxophonist Fred Anderson. In 1977, he cofounded the Mandingo Griot Society with Foday Musa Suso, the celebrated kora player from Gambia, and composer-percussionist Adam Rudolph. Other regular collaborators include bassist William Parker, saxophonist



Douglas R. Ewart & Melody Takata
Photo: Ken Carl



Chizuru Kineaya
Photo: Ken Carl



Ayako Kato, Precious Jennings
Photo: Ken Carl

David Murray, free-jazz saxophonists Peter Brotzmann and Ken Vandermark, and fellow drummer Michael Zerang. More recently, Drake has performed with Archie Shepp in various configurations, the group Phat Jam, and human beat boxer and rapper Napoleon Maddox as part of the jazz/hip-hop group ISWAHAT. He performs frequently with several Hungarian jazz groups, recording with Viktor Tóth and Mihály Dresch, and he has performed with Tatsu Aoki since the 1990s, when they first played together in the Fred Anderson Trio and Quartet. In 2013, Drake was named Artist in Residence for the Chicago Jazz Festival, where he performed with four different ensembles, including Eigen Aoki and drummers from Tsukasa Taiko.

DOUGLAS R. EWART

is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, instrument builder, and visual artist. He was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and as a child experimented with the material, texture, and sound of objects around him. Ewart emigrated to the United States in 1993 and entered the School of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) in 1967 as a student of Shaku Joseph Jarman and Roscoe Mitchell. In 1983, he founded his own recording label, Arawak Records, and has since released two



Nicole Mitchell
Photo: Ken Carl



Tsukasa Taiko Soloist
Photo: Ken Carl



Melody Takata
Photo: Ken Carl



Eigen Aoki, Michael Zerang, Takane Umeya
Photo: Ken Carl

of his albums, *Red Hills* and *Bamboo Forest*. His constantly evolving suite, *Music from the Bamboo Forest*, comprises six movements and uses numerous instruments, many of them handmade, such as bass and alto flutes, *shakuhachi*, panpipe, and nay flutes, blocks, bells, gongs, and bamboo.

Ewart has served as the Chair of the AACM multiple times between 1986 and 2009, and he regularly travels as lecturer, teacher, and workshop leader throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan. He has been received at the Contemporary Art Center (New Orleans, LA), the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago, IL), the DuSable Museum of African American History (Chicago, IL), Urban Gateways (Chicago, IL), the Creative Music Studio (Woodstock, NY), the Museum of Contemporary Craft (New York, NY), the Langston Hughes Center (New York, NY), the University of Illinois (Champaign, IL), Norfolk State University, the Riverside Museum (Baton Rouge, LA), the Washington Performing Arts Center, and the National Museum of American History (Washington, DC). He has led many ensembles including Douglas Ewart and Inventions, Clarinet Choir, Nyhabingi Drum Choir, Quadraset, and Elements. Ewart has performed with a number of musicians including Muhal Richard Abrams, Fred Anderson, Anthony Braxton, Anthony Davis, Robert Dick, Ameen Muhammad, Von Freeman, George Lewis, Leo

Smith, Cecil Taylor, Alvin Curran, Kahil El Zabar, Joseph Jarman, Kalaparush, Roscoe Mitchell, and Mwata Bowden.

GRANDMASTER SHUNOJO FUJIMA

received his *natori* (professional performance name) at a young age, which is a major milestone for a practitioner of the Japanese cultural arts. He went on to open his own school of classical dance in Tokyo and frequently traveled to the United States on tour with his dance troupe. He now permanently resides in Chicago, and for the past thirty-seven years, he has directed his own dance group. In 2013, he received the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation Award for his ongoing work promoting Japanese culture in the US through teaching and performing Japanese classical dance. In addition to the annual recitals, Fujima and his dancers perform for various civic and cultural groups, colleges, universities, and various festivals in and around Chicago and the Midwest.

YOSHINOJO FUJIMA

is a Chicago native who has studied Japanese classical dance for the last twenty-four years. In 2006, as a member of the Fujima Ryu of Chicago dance troupe, she received her *natori*. She continues to train with Shunojo Fujima Sensei, Founder and Director of Fujima Ryu of Chicago, to attain her *shihan* (teaching license), and develops her artistry working with Asian Improv aRts Midwest and Toyoaki Shamisen. She has

Feb 11-14
at MCA Stage

Faye Driscoll



Faye Driscoll Group
Photo: Maria Baranova

Thank You for Coming: Attendance

Tickets at mcachicago.org

Jan 28-30
at MCA Stage

Toshiki Okada/chelfitsch



Photo: Asian Arts Theatre (Moon So Young)

God Bless Baseball

Tickets at mcachicago.org

performed in collaborations with Tatsu Aoki, Tsukasa Taiko, Bellissima Productions, and Yoko Noge's Japanesque.

KIZAN KAWAMURA

is a one of the rising young grandmasters of contemporary Japanese classical music. Born into a traditional *Shakuhachi* (bamboo flute) family, he started his formal practice at an early age under acclaimed grand master Taizan Kawamura. He was a winner of the Kumamoto Japanese classical music competition and was awarded by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in 2009. From contemporary new music to the traditional, Kizan collaborates with many different artists internationally.

AYAKO KATO

is a dancer and choreographer from Yokohama, Japan. She trained in classical ballet in Japan, as well as in *butoh* with master Kazuo Ohno, tai chi, Noh theater dance, and, upon moving to the United States, modern dance. In 1998, Kato established Art Union Humanscape (AUH) with double bassist Jason Roebke. Their extensive performance history throughout the United States, Japan, and Europe includes more than 100 music and dance duets as well as extended collaborations with other musicians and dancers and, most recently, a dance installation project. Kato has been honored with a Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist Award and funding from the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the

Puffin Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council, and the City of Chicago. Since 2010, Kato has been an artist in residence at Hamlin Park Fieldhouse Theater as part of Chicago Moving Company's Dance Shelter Program. Also in 2010, she formed an expanded version of Art Union Humanscape, called AUH++, which performed in the Chicago Jazz Festival's opening ceremony.

CHIZURU KINEYA

is a *nagauta* shamisen artist, a master of the instrument accredited by the legendary Kineya Shamisen family. Her studies began at the age of six, and she now performs with numerous contemporary classical musicians in regular engagements at the National Theater of Japan and in the mainstream Japanese music and performing arts scene. In addition, she leads educational workshops to share the 400-year-long history of the shamisen tradition. Her US debut with the Chicago Asian American Jazz Festival in 2011 marked her first collaboration with Chicago blues musicians. Kineya has regularly collaborated with Tatsu Aoki and GenRyu Arts in San Francisco since her first *Taiko Legacy* engagement in 2005. Her 2012 Tokyo Shamisen CD project, *Toyookimoto*, features Aoki and Melody Takata. She premiered a major Geisha musical theater project in May 2015 in Tokyo, following a preview performance presented by the San Francisco Asian Art Museum in April.

NICOLE MITCHELL

is a flutist, bandleader, composer, and educator. Mitchell is the founder of the critically acclaimed Black Earth Ensemble and Black Earth Strings, and has been named Jazz Flutist of the Year (2010) by the Jazz Journalist Association, Top Flutist (2010) by *Downbeat Magazine*, and Chicagoan of the Year (2006) by the *Chicago Tribune*. Mitchell is the first woman president of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), and her work has been a highlight of festivals throughout Europe, the United States, and Canada. As a composer, she has won fellowships from Chamber Music America and the Illinois Arts Council and has been commissioned by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, Ravinia, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and the Jazz Institute of Chicago. She has performed with the Chicago Sinfonietta, Orbert Davis's Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, Anthony Braxton's 12+1-tet, Rob Mazurek's Exploding Star Orchestra, and David Boykin Expanse. Mitchell was the Artist in Residence at the 2010 Chicago Jazz Festival. Her MCA commission *Mandorla Awakening: Emerging Worlds*, performed by her Black Earth Ensemble, premiered at MCA Stage in May 2015. Mitchell is a professor of music at the University of California, Irvine.

SHINTA

was born and raised in Hokkaido, Japan, where he started studying taiko at the age of ten in the local

neighborhood taiko group. At eighteen, he joined as a trainee of the KODO Taiko group and toured nationally with the ensemble for three years. In 2006, he started performing original solo work in Hokkaido, with highlight engagements, including at the World Volleyball Cup opening ceremony, the first Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize ceremony, the 150th anniversary of US/Japan opening of the Yokohama Port, and the Shanghai Expo.

MELODY TAKATA

grew up in the Los Angeles area and has been performing in the traditional arts for more than twenty-five years. She is the founder and director of GenRyu Arts, established in 1995 as Gen Taiko and incorporated in 2008. She completed the ACTA master apprentice program for shamisen with Hideko Nakajima Sensei in 2003 and, in celebration of Gen Taiko's tenth anniversary, the ACTA master apprentice program with ninety-year-old Madame Fujima Kansuma. Takata has been one of the most significant collaborators on Tsukasa Taiko's national expansion program. Her original music releases include the 2014 CD *Shadow to Shadow* and her latest project, *Pages*.

GWENDOLYN TERRY

is a Chicago-based installation artist. Her work has been seen nationally in solo exhibitions and numerous theatrical productions. In 2014, her large-scale installation *Murmuration* commissioned by the University of Notre Dame

Megan Lee,
Edward Wilkerson,
Mwata Bowden
Photo: Ken Carl



was chosen for the Curators Must-See list at ArtPrize in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and voted one of the Top 25 installation pieces. In September 2015, she was the visual director of the production *Music, Courage and Remembrance*, a tribute to the work of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Shulamit Ran.

TAKANE UMEYA

is a certified performer from the traditional Umeya clan and active in Nagauta, a form of Japanese classical music used in Kabuki, the theater genre with origins in the dramatic dance of the early seventeenth-century Tokugawa shogunate. Originally performed by all-female ensembles, Kabuki gained popularity for its eroticism among the lower-class population before being banned and changed to all-male ensembles. Kabuki re-emerged in the early Meiji period and today is performed frequently in theaters and on television. *Nagauta* was incorporated into Kabuki theater in the eighteenth century and is still performed

by an ensemble utilizing traditional Japanese instrumentation, with shamisen as the main instrument accompanied by *taiko* drum, *otsuzumi* hip drum, *kotsuzumi* shoulder drum, and *nōkan* flute. Umeya is among only a handful of certified classical players in Japan today and in high demand as a Kabuki house musician. She performs frequently in classical and festival music concerts, and collaborates with contemporary musicians and media artists.

FRANCIS WONG

is one of the longest-running collaborators with Tatsu Aoki—for the last twenty years. A prolific recording artist, Wong is a featured saxophonist on more than forty titles as a leader and collaborator. He has toured throughout North America, Asia, and Europe with luminaries such as Jon Jang, Tatsu Aoki, Genny Lim, William Roper, Bobby Bradford, the Late John Tchicai, James Newton, Joseph Jarman, Don Moye, and the late Glenn Horiuchi.

MICHAEL ZERANG

is a first-generation American of Assyrian descent and was born in Chicago. He has been a professional musician, composer, and producer since 1976, focusing extensively on improvised music, free jazz, contemporary composition, puppet theater, experimental theater, and international musical forms. Zerang has collaborated extensively with contemporary theater, dance, and other multidisciplinary forms and has received three Joseph Jefferson Awards for Original Music Composition in Theater (1996, 1998, 2000) in collaboration with Redmoon Theater. As a percussionist and composer, he has more than eighty titles in his discography and has toured nationally and internationally to thirty-three countries since 1981. Zerang is a percussionist with the creative music group The Trio Waz, with Tatsu Aoki and Edward Wilkerson Jr. He also tours and holds workshops and teaches private lessons in improvisational music, rhythmic analysis, music composition, and percussion technique.

TSUKASA TAIKO

began as Tsukasa Daiko and was founded in 1996 by Hide Yoshihashi in conjunction with Japanese classical dance grandmaster Wakayagi Shiyu. Yoshihashi collaborated with Asian ImprovArts Midwest's executive director Tatsu Aoki to expand the organization, and in 2004 Tsukasa Taiko became the resident ensemble of the Japanese American Service Committee (JASC). In 2005, Tsukasa Taiko launched the division Toyooki

Shamisen to revive the traditional musical relationship between the shamisen and taiko, taking an innovative step toward a more comprehensive taiko music experience. Its repertoire is unique in the United States for merging *kumi-daiko* (ensemble taiko) with other forms of Japanese folk and classical music, and employing shamisen as well as *shinobue* (flute). Tsukasa Taiko performs a broad range of musical styles, including *ogashiki* (geisha chamber music), *minyo* (folk music), and *ohayashi* (classical/folk/theater music) styles, and represents many Japanese musical traditions that are now rarely practiced. Its lead role in the preservation, presentation, and advancement of Japanese arts is recognized internationally, with notable performances at Tokyo's Bunka Shutter Hall, the Poland/Malta International Theatre Festival, the Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Tsukasa Taiko has been a feature at the Asian American Jazz Festival, Chicago Jazz Festival, Chicago World Music Festival, Symphony Center, and the Harris Theater. Tsukasa Taiko also offers classes, workshops, lectures, and demonstrations throughout the year for students at all experience levels as part of its dedication to strengthening Chicago's Japanese American and Asian American communities, and using the arts to deepen the community's understanding of its heritage and cultural legacy.

Feb 4-7
at MCA Stage

Ingri Fiksdal, Ingvild Langgård & Signe Becker



Photo: Signe Becker

Cosmic Body

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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.

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- 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.

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* Enact Chair
**Enact Cochair

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.



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Museum of
Contemporary Art
Chicago

220 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611

As of December 2015

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 Grynsztejn,
Pritzker Director
Teresa Samala
de Guzman, Deputy
Director
Michael Darling,
James W. Alsdorf
Chief Curator

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Yolanda Cesta Cursach,
Associate Director
John Rich, Manager
Isabel Dieppa,
Coordinator
Richard Norwood,
Theater
Production
Manager
Amanda L. Block, Intern
Udita Upadhyaya, Intern

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

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

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Diandra Miller, Associate
Eric Shoemaker, Associate

Program notes compiled
by Yolanda Cesta Cursach

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