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

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 Kinosaki 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.
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.

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 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
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 chelftsch 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

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 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
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.

Hongye Lee is a member of the Korean creative theater company DIRECTURG42. Foreign plays that she has translated into Korean include I was Punched for Sticking Out Slightly, 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 Edaily 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.

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

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 groundbreaking 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.

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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
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As of January 2016
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.

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312-280-2660

BOX OFFICE
312-397-4010

VOLUNTEER FOR PERFORMANCES
312-397-4072
mcastage@mcachicago.org

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

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Program notes compiled by Yolanda Cesta Cursach