## FALL SEASON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 17</td>
<td>Burnt Sugar the Arkestra Chamber '&lt;br&gt;Sweet Sweetback’s Baadassssss Song'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 4–6</td>
<td>Dorrance Dance '&lt;br&gt;ETM Double Down'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copresented with Chicago Human Rythm Project and Chicago Humanities Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1–4, 8–11</td>
<td>ONEOFUS Julie Atlas '&lt;br&gt;Muz and Mat Fraser Beauty and the Beast'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 16–17</td>
<td>Tatsu Aoki '&lt;br&gt;Reduction'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copresented with Asian Improv aRts Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 17–18</td>
<td>Tatsu Aoki '&lt;br&gt;Tsukasa Taiko Legacy'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copresented with Asian Improv aRts Midwest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART <br>CHICAGO
Tatsu Aoki
Tsukasa Taiko Legacy 13

Taiko
Classical dance
Bamboo flute
Shamisen
Hand Drum, Percussion
Taiko
Classical Dance

TSUKASA TAIKO

GINTENKAI UNIT:

Mark Aburano-Meister
Eigen Aoki*
Kito Aoki
Miyumi Aoki
Neil Ducklow
Justin Mark
Kiyomi Negi
Kenji Negi
Koji Negi
Morgan Mican
Noriko Sugiyama
Jun Takenarita
Colin Wong

PRODUCTION

Joan Ambo
(Yubukai Chicago)
Yukiko Aoki
Joyce Ashizawa-Yee
( GenRyu Arts SF)
Steven Ducklow
Cameron Hadley
( GenRyu Arts SF)
Gail Itokazu

ADMISTRATION

Executive Producer and
Artistic Director
Director of Development
Development Consultant
Director of Outreach and
Education
IT Marketing Consultant
Public Relations and Marketing
Board President

Tatsu Aoki
Jennifer Oatfield
Jeff Chan
Joanne Kiyoko Tohei
Kazu Yamamoto
Kimio Naka
Francis Wong

RUNNING TIME IS 100 MINUTES WITH NO INTERMISSION

This performance is in memory of Yoshio Frank Kawaguchi.

Generous support for MCA Dance is provided by David Herro and Jay Franke.
Tsuksa Taiko is a program of Asian Improv aRts Midwest and the Japanese American Service Committee of Chicago and is supported in part by the Illinois Arts Council; the MacArthur Fund for Arts & Culture at The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation; the Alphawood Foundation; Corbett Duncan & Hubly P. C.; the JCCC Foundation; the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; and The Joyce Foundation.

Special thanks to Asian Improv aRts (San Francisco), Kay Kawaguchi and Michael Tanimura of the Japanese American Service Committee, Michael Takada, Ken Carl, Michiko Yamamoto, Joyce Jeng and Asian Social Network, Lauren Deutsch and the Jazz Institute of Chicago, Fujima Ryu of Chicago, Asian Improv Records Inc. and AOYA-MSD Inc., Irene Cualoping, Noriko and Kenichi Sugiyama, Takako Kimura, Murasaki Sake Lounge, and Lara Oppenheimer for their in-kind services and contributions.

Copresented with
Asian Improv aRts Midwest
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.

MCA STUDIO
Dec 19, 6–8 pm
Kabuki Workshop

Sennosuke Wakatsuki is modernizing the kabuki form. With percussion master Shijuro Tachibana he leads a workshop for intermediary to advanced level students and professionals in dance and theater. The class foregrounds the core skills related to traditional Japanese art and performance, and is accompanied by Hyakkyyou Fukuhara (bamboo flute) and Chizuru Kineya (shamisen).

Immediately preceding the workshop, participants are invited to observe a brief Master Apprentice presentation, with shamisen apprentice Kiku Tarura performing with master artist Tatsu Aoki, and taiko apprentice Helen Nagata performing with master artist Kioto Aoki. Musical accompaniment for the duets is provided by grandmasters Tachibana, Fukuhara, Kineya, and Yoshinojo Fujima, and Grandmaster Shunojo Fujima provides traditional dance.

MCA SCREEN
Tatsu Aoki, formalism, structuralism, and reduction

On December 13, Tatsu Aoki introduced a selection of his 16 mm and recent digital film works. An improvised soundscape was performed live by Jonathan Chen on electronics and Jamie Kempkers on cello.

Tatsu Aoki has been creating experimental films for more than thirty years. The sum of Aoki’s massive filmography is an abstract visual journey through 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. For the MCA, he screened the titles *Dream Works*, 16 mm (color, sound), 14 minutes (1981); *Decades Passed: Re-Edit* 16 mm (color, sound) 25 minutes (2003); *Ah So Desuka: Is That So,* “digital image with live music: 42 minutes (2012); and *Visual Scape "Ah Sou Desuka: is that so!"*

---

Jan 19–22
at MCA Stage

Silencio Blanco

Silencio Blanco, El Chiflón
Photo: Lorenzo Mella

Chiflón, El Silencio del Carbón (Chiflón, Silence of the Coal)

Tickets at mcachicago.org
“SUZEROKU MATSURI”

Led by Melody Takata and featuring original choreography inherited from Oedo Sukeroku, this piece incorporates movements inspired by Kabuki dance, featuring Gen Ensemble. The work presents a recognizable esoteric concept of taiko movement that originates from the late 1960s.

“ROKUBAN”

This original piece started as a rudimentary exercise in polyrhythmic interpretation and gradually evolved into the present ensemble work. The piece emphasizes the use of the diagonal sukeroku Kabuki stance and a long pause in the middle of the song that is uncharacteristic of mainstream taiko compositions.

“MIRAKU”

Literally “the joy of taste,” miraku refers to the food culture of Japan. The essence of a dish is not represented by a strong flavor, rather a subtle layering of different aromas that blend to provide an essence of flavor. This is the theme of the song.

“NOBI”

This piece was inspired by the story of the brutal survival experiences of Japanese soldiers in the Philippines in 1959, and its title is borrowed from a famous war novel written by Ooka Shohei. Though the original story is grave and torturous, the imagery driving the composition of this piece is meant to be a serene and honest absolution.

“GFR”

Aoki and his fellow Gintenkai members were first exposed to American rock band Grand Funk Railroad (GFR) while still in junior high school. They attended the band’s first live performance in Japan in 1971 and were inspired by the power trio. This song is their tribute to the band.

“HADODON”

Aoki’s taiko teacher, Grandmaster Yasujiro Ohayashi, always proclaimed that one must “dance” before taiko. One must “shamisen” before taiko. It is because of this attitude, that the taiko music from Gintenkai is a uniquely formed theatrical presentation. Originally a simple dance piece, “Hadodon” has been recalibrated into a taiko composition. Therefore, the taiko

Tatsu Aoki
Executive Producer and Artistic Director
Tsukasa Taiko

FROM THE ARTIST

WE HAVE MADE IT TO THE TWENTIETH YEAR SINCE TSUKASA TAIKO’S FOUNGING—WELCOME!

As I look back on taiko’s remarkable history and its being embraced by popular culture in our time, I feel compelled to make the case for the art of taiko performance. It is an argument for resisting inverting the relationship between something’s popularity and the formal knowledge of its aesthetics. What will remain of our understanding of taiko after the novelty wears off?

Tsukasa Taiko Legacy and my more recent project Reduction are creative responses to popular taiko that foreground musical elements over dynamic and stylized drumming.

Tsukasa Taiko’s vision is to promote a more expansive understanding of Asian Americans’ complex historical and cultural practices. In my role, I focus on “performativities” in how we play and teach, taking care to preserve 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 on 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 to performing Japanese-ness and music.

In other words, the nature of cultural identity is not rooted in the context, but rather is the content.

For example, goma, or sesame, is a common ingredient in much of Asian cuisine. It adds aromatic flavor and improves the visual presentation of an authentic dish, such as sushi, but does sprinkling sesame seeds on top make anything distinctly Japanese? That is a misconstrued idea at best.

The idea that more drumming, more powerful drumming, represents taiko is the sesame of the art form. Too much sesame is making taiko an unrecognizable dish. I am happy to resist the trend. And I invite you to share in this slowed performance to taste the whole aesthetic range of taiko.

Tatsu Aoki
Executive Producer and Artistic Director
Tsukasa Taiko

ABOUT THE WORK

“SUZEROKU MATSURI”

Led by Melody Takata and featuring original choreography inherited from Oedo Sukeroku, this piece incorporates movements inspired by Kabuki dance, featuring Gen Ensemble. The work presents a recognizable esoteric concept of taiko movement that originates from the late 1960s.

“ROKUBAN”

This original piece started as a rudimentary exercise in polyrhythmic interpretation and gradually evolved into the present ensemble work. The piece emphasizes the use of the diagonal sukeroku Kabuki stance and a long pause in the middle of the song that is uncharacteristic of mainstream taiko compositions.

“MIRAKU”

Literally “the joy of taste,” miraku refers to the food culture of Japan. The essence of a dish is not represented by a strong flavor, rather a subtle layering of different aromas that blend to provide an essence of flavor. This is the theme of the song.

“NOBI”

This piece was inspired by the story of the brutal survival experiences of Japanese soldiers in the Philippines in 1959, and its title is borrowed from a famous war novel written by Ooka Shohei. Though the original story is grave and torturous, the imagery driving the composition of this piece is meant to be a serene and honest absolution.

“GFR”

Aoki and his fellow Gintenkai members were first exposed to American rock band Grand Funk Railroad (GFR) while still in junior high school. They attended the band’s first live performance in Japan in 1971 and were inspired by the power trio. This song is their tribute to the band.

“HADODON”

Aoki’s taiko teacher, Grandmaster Yasujiro Ohayashi, always proclaimed that one must “dance” before taiko. One must “shamisen” before taiko. It is because of this attitude, that the taiko music from Gintenkai is a uniquely formed theatrical presentation. Originally a simple dance piece, “Hadodon” has been recalibrated into a taiko composition. Therefore, the taiko
melody lines correlate with the arm and leg movements of the choreography. The Taiko Legacy version is a larger Kumidaiko ensemble work, featuring Shunojo Fujima and Sennosuke Wakatuski.

“SUJI—PART II”

The term suji refers to a literal ligament connection as well as the energies required to maintain a bond—whether through custom, tradition, or art. This is the second part of Suji, the first of which was presented last year. The setting for this work is a forest. In contrast, the actual taiko line is quite static. The unfolding of the orchestral concept links the music to the landscape, as it underscores the drum’s central role to create sound and body movement.

“TSUKASA TAIKO 20TH ANNIVERSARY STORY”

Before art can be achieved, there are certain necessary stages of development. This medley includes our rudimentary songs and popular ensemble taiko songs for kids. These pieces form the building blocks that lead to the art embraced by community members who appreciate drumming culture and the origin of Tsukasa Taiko.

“ODORIBA: SCENE 3”

This original composition by the Gintenkai cultural troupe premiered in Tokyo in 1976 as part of a play. Taiko parts were used in the theater’s pit music for several scenes and performed by seven drummers. For Tsukasa Taiko’s rendition, Aoki expands the scale to connect three of the play’s parts into a single, epic, large-ensemble work.

CCN–Ballet de Lorraine

Feb 18–19
at MCA Stage

WORKS BY MERCE CUNNINGHAM AND OTHERS

Tickets at mcachicago.org
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 2,000-year-old 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 widespread popularity, particularly in the United States, where it has become a celebrated symbol of cultural heritage for the Japanese American community.

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.
Aoki's awards include the Asian American Institute Milestone Award (2007), Japan America Society of Chicago Cultural Achievement Award (2010), 3Arts Artist Award (2010), Japanese American Service Committee Living in our Culture Award (2014), and National Jazz Journalist Association Jazz Heroes Award (2015).

Most recently, Aoki arranged the music of Yoko Ono for the Miyumi Ensemble’s CD recording and performance at the unveiling of Sky Landing, the public art work by Yoko Ono for the Japanese Gardens in Chicago’s Jackson Park.

HYAKKYOU FUKUHARA is one of only a handful certified performer from the traditional Fukuhara clan performing actively in the Kabuki–Nagauta tradition. Hyakkyou works in the classical tradition and in more contemporary settings, such as modern music collaborations and media arts.

SHUNOJO FUJIMA received his natori (professional performance name) at a young age and went on to open his own studio of classical dance in Tokyo, frequently traveling to the United States on tour with his dance troupe. Fujima now permanently resides in Chicago and performs at various civic and cultural events, schools, and festivals in the Midwest. In 2013, he received the Japanese Foreign Minister’s Commendation Award for his ongoing work promoting Japanese culture in the United States.

CHIZURU KINEYA is a nagauta shamisen artist, a master of the instrument accredited by the legendary Kineya Shamisen clan. She began her studies at the age of six, and she now regularly performs with numerous contemporary and classical musicians in engagements in the mainstream music and performing arts scene. In addition to performing, she also leads educational workshops to share the 400-year history of the shamisen tradition. Chizuru 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, Toyoakimoto, features Aoki and Melody Takata. She is currently working on a geisha musical theater project that premieres in March 2017 in Tokyo, as well as on a musical collaboration with Francis Wong’s ensemble that will also be released in early 2017.

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. Takata completed the ACTA master apprentice program for shamisen with Hideko Nakajima Sensei in 2003 and the ACTA master apprentice program with Madame Fujima Kansuma. Takata is currently in production for new performance Bamboo, scheduled to premiere in San Francisco in 2017, and an untitled multidisciplinary performance work also set to debut in 2017.

SHIJURO TACHIBANA graduated from the National Shunojo Fujima

Chizuru Kineya

Courtesy of the artist

Shuno Fujima

Courtesy of the artist

Hyakkyou Fukuhara in Tsukasa Taiko: Taiko Legacy

Photo: Ken Carl

 Courtesy of the artist

Hyakkyou Fukuhara

Courtesy of the artist

Shinojo Fujima

Courtesy of the artist

Chizuru Kineya

Courtesy of the artist

Hyakkyou Fukuhara

Courtesy of the artist

Shinojo Fujima

Courtesy of the artist

Chizuru Kineya

Courtesy of the artist
Kabuki Theater specializing in *narimono*, and is a formal percussionist for Japanese classical dance and Kabuki performances at the National Kabuki Theater. In 2010, he founded Kabuki Mirai Juku, a not-for-profit organization that specializes in Kabuki workshops and concentrates on introducing traditional kabuki theater arts to children through educational outreach workshops and presentations.

**SENNOSUKE WAKATSUKI**

is the firstborn son of Sennojo Wakatsuki and was raised training in Japanese classical dance. He graduated from Nihon University, majoring in Japanese classical dance and creative theater. In 2007, he continued his training for three years at the National Kabuki Theater of Japan, where he concentrated on Japanese classical dance, shamisen, and stage fighting. In 2010 he made his debut performance at the National Kabuki Theater, performing the nagauta classic *Sukeroku*. In 2011 he created the organization Wa no Kai, which is an organization specializing in educational outreach for the Japanese traditional arts. Presently, he is an adjunct professor at Josai University in Chiba, Japan. This past October he succeeded his father as the headmaster for the Wakatsuki Dance School, and has since been travelling internationally for cultural exchange seminars.

**TSUKASA TAIKO**

was founded as Tsukasa Daiko in 1996 by Hide Yoshihashi in conjunction with Japanese classical dance grandmaster Wakayagi Shiyu. Yoshihashi collaborated with Asian Improv aRts 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 Toyoaki 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 *oazshiki* (geisha chamber music), *minyo* (folk music), and *ohayashi* (classical/folk/theater music), and represents many Japanese musical traditions that are now rarely practiced. The group’s lead role in the preservation, presentation, and advancement of Japanese arts is recognized internationally, with notable performances at Tokyo’s Bunka Shutter Hall, Poland’s 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 of all 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.
The MCA's newest affinity group, **Enact**, is a group of MCA Circle Donors dedicated to supporting the renowned programs of MCA Stage. Join today for opportunities to meet artists, gain behind-the-scenes access, and discuss groundbreaking directions with leading curators—all while providing vital support.

**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
- Invitation to Season Reveal, an annual preview of the upcoming season
- Opportunities for complimentary drinks and tickets
- All benefits of Circle Donors (see mcachicago.org/circle)

Circle Donor membership is required to join Enact. Enact dues are an additional $1,000 annually.

**Enact Members**

- Dr. Bruce and Sally Bauer
- Leigh and Henry Bienen
- Ms. Shawn M. Donnelley* and Dr. 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
- Cynthia Hunt and Philip Rudolph
- Mary E. Ittelson
- Anne L. Kaplan
- Anne and John Kern
- Elizabeth A. Liebman
- Abby McCormick O’Neil and D. Carroll Joyner
- Sharon* and Lee Oberlander
- Karen Peters and Charles Frank
- 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
- Linda and Michael Welsh

*Enact Cochair

**Thank You**

Lead support for the 2016–17 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; Shawn M. Donnelley and Christopher M. Kelly; Lois and Steve Eisen and The Eisen Family Foundation; Ginger Farley and Bob Shapiro; the Martha Struthers Farley and Donald C. Farley Jr. Family Foundation; Mary E. Ittelson; Sharon and Lee Oberlander; Maya Polsky; Carol Prins and John Hart/The Jessica Fund; Ellen Stone Belic; Amphion Foundation, Inc.; Leigh and Henry Bienen; Mark Light; Melynda Lopin; Maecenas; Herbert R. and Paula Molner; Elizabeth Price and Lou Yecies; and Ms. Patricia F. Sternberg.

The MCA is a proud partner of the National Performance Network (NPN) and a proud member of the Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.
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 US 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 coat check for $12 parking in the MCA garage (220 East Chicago Avenue) and the Bernardin garage (747 North Wabash). The $12 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 are prohibited.

GENERAL INFORMATION
312-280-2660

BOX OFFICE
312-397-4010

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

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

PERFORMANCE
Yolanda Cesta Cursach, Curator
John Rich, Manager
Richard Norwood, Theater Production Manager
Phill Cabeen, Curatorial Assistant
Rivka Arbetter, Metcalf Intern
Kori Whitby, Intern

HOUSE MANAGEMENT
Kevin Brown, Associate
Megan Cline, Associate
Quinlan Kirchner, Associate

BOX OFFICE
Matti Allison, Manager
Phongtorn Phongluantum, Assistant Manager
Molly Laemle, Coordinator
Lucas Baisch, Associate
Arion Davis, Associate
Wright Gatewood, Associate
Peyton Lynch, Associate

Program notes compiled by Yolanda Cesta Cursach

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