

OKW/UI OKPOKW/ASILI
Poor People's TV Room

Program
Notes

Thu-Sun
Apr 12-15, 2018

MCA
STAGE

Edlis Neeson
Theater

Eyes
Wide

Lights
Low

at MCA
Stage

Winter/Spring
2018

Poor People's TV Room
running time is
ninety minutes with
no intermission.

SUPPORT FOR THIS
MCA STAGE PROJECT

Touring support for *Poor People's TV Room* is provided by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Accessible programming for *Poor People's TV Room* is supported by artist/scholar Carrie Sandahl, director of Bodies of Work: A Network of Disability Arts and Culture and faculty in the Department of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

MCA Stage acknowledges the support of Jeanine Pollard, Master's candidate in Museum and Exhibition Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago and primary liaison for Bodies of Work at MCA Stage in the 2017-18 season.



Conceived, Cowritten, and Performed by
Okwui Okpokwasili

Cowritten and Directed with Scenic and Lighting
Design by Peter Born

Performers	Thuli Dumakude, Okwui Okpokwasili, Katrina Reid, and Nehemoyia Young
Original Songs	Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born
Movement	Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born, in collaboration with Thuli Dumakude, Katrina Reid, and Nehemoyia Young

ADMINISTRATION AND PRODUCTION

Production Manager and Technical Director	Michaelangelo DeSerio
Company Manager	Naja Gordon
Touring Producer	Lucy Jackson
Publicist	Janet Stapleton
Management	Los Angeles Performance Practice / PerformancePractice.org
Producer	MAPP International Productions in association with New York Live Arts

FROM THE CURATOR

Okwui Okpokwasili focuses *Poor People's TV Room* on erased movements of resistance and collective action. Two historical incidents in Nigeria drive the artist's theater work: the Women's War of 1929 and the Boko Haram kidnappings of more than 270 girls in 2014. *Poor People's TV Room* draws attention to the echo effect of knowingness. In our connected age, in our personal TV room, we can be almost infinitely knowing. There's a kind of liberty in consuming facts cheaply, but what is the cost? For many years, Okwui has been interested in the ways that knowledge is possessed in the mind and body. She is also realistic. Multitudes of people wear their knowledge heavily, constrained by poverty, marginalization, oppression, and the bad luck of their birthplace. The rest can collect knowingness from a position of comfort. Okwui binds *Poor People's TV Room* to a deep belief that knowledge is something that we all must endure. She is interested in the politics of that possession, and in the brutal wisdom of what we have to go through in order to understand how little, in the end, we know.

I am grateful to Marion Malcome and Franklin Cosey-Gay at the Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention at the School of Social Service Administration at The University of Chicago, and to Cynthia Henderson and Khari Matthew Humphries at Oakwood Shores for organizing a gathering this week with Okwui and other remarkable women for conversation, writing, and reflection.

—Yolanda Cesta Cursach,
Curator of Performance

OKWUI OKPOKWASILI *Poor People's TV Room*

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Poor People's TV Room was produced by MAPP International Productions in association with New York Live Arts, with lead support from New York Live Arts Resident Commission Artist program.

It has been commissioned by the American Dance Institute and the Walker Art Center. *Poor People's TV Room* is a project of Creative Capital. It has received funding from The MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. *Poor People's TV Room* was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support was also received from the Ken and Judith Joy Family Foundation. It is supported by developmental residencies at The Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida; Brooklyn Creative Arts Lab (BRIC); Lower Manhattan Cultural Council; Denniston Hill Residency; Times Square Alliance Artists in Residence; Alternative Spring Break: NYC Performing Arts at Columbia; 92Y in New York; The Rauschenberg Residency (Robert Rauschenberg Foundation) on Captiva Island, Florida; and Wesleyan University in Middlebury, Connecticut. An early work-in-progress iteration of *Poor People's TV Room* was presented by Lincoln Center in the David Rubenstein Atrium in June 2014.

Heartfelt thanks to Kayla Affrunti, Isabel Allen, Hilton Als, John Andress, Dave Archuleta, Tyler Ashley, Sean Bauer, Kristen Bernier, Philip Bither, Umechi Born, John Born, Ann Brady, Jennifer Brogle, Pia and Nima Brogle-Kouyaté, Nora Chipaumire. . .

RELATED PROGRAMS

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.

SCREENING: ANDREW ROSSI AND OKWUI OKPOKWASILI,
BRONX GOTHIC
Sun, Apr 22, 3–5 pm

Join us for a screening of *Bronx Gothic*, Andrew Rossi's electrifying portrait of writer and performer Okwui Okpokwasili and her acclaimed solo show of the same title. The film gives insight into Okpokwasili's creative process and the complex social issues it embodies. Rooted in her childhood memories, she creates a mesmerizing space in which audiences engage with a story about two 12-year-old black girls coming of age in the 1980s. After the screening, join Chicago artists Brendan Fernandes, Darrell Jones, and Amina Ross in a conversation about race and the process of making live performance. Copresented by the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago.

Admission to *Bronx Gothic* is free with purchase of a ticket to *Poor People's TV Room*.

WORKSHOP: *SITTING ON A MAN'S HEAD*
Mon, Apr 9, and Mon, Apr 16, at Oakwood Shores

Thanks to Franklin Cosey-Gay and Marion Malcome of the Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention at the University of Chicago and to Khari Humphries of The Community Builders for helping to organize this conversation in two parts between Okwui Okpokwasili and a group of women community leaders. The workshop investigates performance through writing and draws from themes that informed the creation of *Poor People's TV Room*: genetic memory, public shaming as a resistance method, and the powerful and specific cultural context of violence in society.

ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

ASL-INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE with AUDIO
DESCRIPTION
Sun, Apr 15, 2 pm

ASL interpretation by Amy Kisner is provided for this performance. Victor Cole provides an optional live Audio Description for patrons who are blind or low vision. Headsets can be reserved by calling our Box Office at 312-397-4010.



Okwui Okpokwasili, *Poor People's TV Room*. Photo © Ian Douglas.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

OKWUI OKPOKWASILI is a New York-based writer, performer, and choreographer. In partnership with collaborator Peter Born, Okpokwasili creates multidisciplinary projects. Their first New York production, *Pent-Up: A Revenge Dance*, premiered at Performance Space 122 and received a 2010 New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award for Outstanding Production; an immersive installation version was featured in the 2008 Prelude Festival. Their second collaboration, *Bronx Gothic*, won a 2014 New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award for Outstanding Production and continues to tour both nationally and internationally. In June of 2014, they presented an installation entitled *Bronx Gothic: The Oval* as part of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's River to River Festival. An early iteration of *Poor People's TV Room* was presented at Lincoln Center's David Rubenstein Atrium in June 2014. As a performer, Okpokwasili frequently collaborates with award-winning director Ralph Lemon, including *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?*, *Come Home Charley Patton* (for which she also won a New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award), a duet performed at The Museum of Modern Art as part of *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*, and, most recently, Ralph Lemon's *Scaffold Room*. Okpokwasili's residencies and awards include the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography Choreographic Fellowship (2012), Baryshnikov Arts Center Artist-in-Residence (2013), New York Live Arts Studio Series (2013), Under Construction at the Park Avenue Armory (2013), New York Foundation for the Arts' Fellowship in Choreography (2013), Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Extended Life Program (2014-15), The Foundation for Contemporary Arts' Grants to Artists in dance (2014), BRIClab (2015), Columbia University (2015), and the Rauschenberg Residency (2015). She is a 2018 USA award grantee and will be a Hodder Fellow at Princeton in 2018-19.

PETER BORN is a director, designer, and filmmaker. In addition to his work with Okpokwasili on *Pent-Up: A Revenge Dance* and *Bronx Gothic*, he has collaborated with David Thomson on a cycle of installation/performances revolving around a post-sexual incarnation of Venus. He designed and created the set for Nora Chipaumire's *rite/riot*, and he has created performance videos with Chipaumire, Thomson, and Daria Fain, among others. He works as an art director and prop stylist for video and photo projects with clients such as *Vogue*, Estée Lauder, Barneys Co-op, Bloomingdale's, Old Navy, *25 Magazine*, Northrup Grumman, and *The Wall Street Journal*, with collaborators including Kanye West, Barnaby Roper, Santiago and Mauricio Sierra, Quentin Jones, and No Strings Productions. He is a former New York public high school teacher, an itinerant floral designer, corporate actor-facilitator, and furniture designer. His collaborations with Okwui Okpokwasili have garnered two New York Dance and Performance Bessie Awards.

THULI DUMAKUDE (PERFORMER) is winner of the Sir Lawrence Olivier Award in London and the Obie in New York for her lead role in *Poppie Nongena*. She's the winner of three Audelco Awards in New York for writing, directing, and performing her one-woman show *Buya Africa*, for which she also won the FNB Vita Award for performances at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa. Her performance credits include Rafiki in *The Lion King* on Broadway, *Poppie Nongena* in New York, London, Toronto, Australia, and Chicago; Bongi in *Bongi's Journey* at Crossroads Theatre; *Lost in the Stars*; KaMadonsela (Lady Macbeth) in *Welcome Msomi's Umabatha* in South Africa, London, Israel, and New York City; *Halala* the musical; *Sheila's Day* at Crossroads Theatre, Grahamstown Festival, and The Market Theatre in Johannesburg; *Madre* in *Juan Darien*, directed by Julie Taymor; and *Grandma* in *Generations* at Soho Rep. Dumakude

SUPPORT FOR THE ARTISTS (Continued)

Cecelia Clarke, Michelle Coe, Rachel Colbert, Brittni Collins, Kim Cullen, Lisa Dent, Sherry Dobbin, Jess Edkins, Kristy Edmonds, Sean Elwood, Ashley Ferro-Murray, Jim Finley, Marcus Flemming, Vallejo Gantner, Maria Luisa Gambale, Najia Gordon, Julia Gutiérrez-Rivera, Matt Hall, Ian Hamelin, Emily Harney, Isabella Hreljanovic, Judy Hussie-Taylor, Emmanuel Iduma, Bill T. Jones, Jenn Joy, Yuki Kawahisa, Sohui Kim, Danielle King, Jaamil Kosoko, Tommy Kriegsman, Ralph Lemon, Melissa Levin, Mandi Masden, Kyle Maude, David Milch, Sam Miller, Karen Monroe, Christopher Myers, William Nadyam, Natasha Norton, Dr. Bertram Okpokwasili, Eunice Okpokwasili, Omagbitse Omagbemi, Em Pak, Carla Perez, Carla Peterson, Dani Reuben, Ben Schneider, Kaneza Schaal, Terri Schwab, John-Mario Sevilla, Samita Sinha, Phumzile Sitole, Kay Takeda, Tanyaradzwa Tavenga, Mike Taylor, Steven Taylor, David Thomson, Jessica Todd, Alexa Turnbull, Ashe Turner, Charmaine Warren, Edisa Weeks, Janet Wong, Miranda Wright, and Cathy Zimmerman.

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

Select MCA Stage performances include open-captioning, sign-interpretation, listening devices, or are relaxed sensory.

Please call 312-397-4010 in advance to reserve seats and inclusive services.

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220 E Chicago Ave
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Single performance tickets starting at \$30; \$10 for students, limited availability.

Groups of ten or more save 20% on full-price tickets; call 312-397-4010.

FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION WITH TICKET

Present your MCA Stage ticket stub to receive FREE ADMISSION* and 10% off your purchase at the MCA Store.** Or become an MCA Member and save 15%.

Ticket stub is valid during regular hours up to seven days after the performance date.

* Not accepted for special ticketed exhibitions.

** Regular price, in-stock merchandise only; no other discounts apply.

is the cofounder and director of a female a cappella group, THOKOZA, which sang at Nelson Mandela's 80th birthday celebration in South Africa. They also performed at Riverside Church for Mandela's memorial service; Carnegie Hall with Ladysmith Black Mambazo; Riverside Church in *The Footsteps of Mandela*; The Playroom Theater Off-Broadway; and *I Sing for Freedom* at Lincoln Center. Dumakude was the vocal coach for *Sarafina* on Broadway and vocal coach and musical director for *Sheila's Day*. She was the assistant director and choreographer for *Umabatha* (The Zulu Macbeth). She choreographed for Chicago's Muntu Dance Theatre and Dinizulu Dance Company and was Dance Director for Izulu Dance Theatre Company for ten years. Film credits include *Cry Freedom* and *Power of One* where she appeared as a soloist, and *Serengeti* for IMAX. During apartheid, Dumakude toured globally in live concerts raising awareness about the plight of her fellow South Africans. She continues to work with Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and the Lion King Companies in America, providing them with hand-beaded merchandise to raise funds for HIV/AIDS, part of which goes to AIDS organizations in South Africa.

KATRINA REID (PERFORMER) is a performing artist and writer. She currently has the great fortune to work with David Thomson, Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born, and Jonathan Gonzalez. Past creative ventures include Third Rail Projects' *The Grand Paradise* and Megan Byrne's *Mediums*. A 2016-17 Dancing While Black Fellow, Reid's own work has been presented as part of AUNTS, the Current Sessions, Gibney Dance's *Double Plus* series, Cocoon Theatre, Studio 26 Gallery, and the Borough of Manhattan Community College Tribeca Performing Arts Center.

NEHEMOYIA YOUNG (PERFORMER) is a Brooklyn-based dancer, choreographer, educator, and cultural activist. She has worked with Maria Bauman Dance, André Zachary/Renegade Performance Group, and Sydnie L. Mosley Dances. When offstage, she works as a

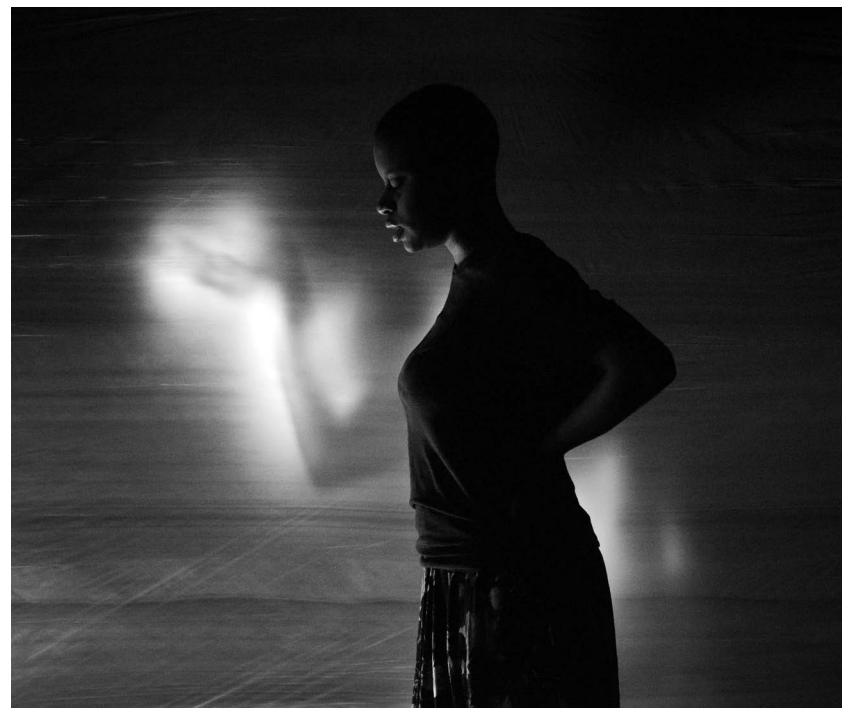
dance and creative movement teaching artist for GlobalArts to Go, a multicultural arts, education, training, and entertainment organization which serves diverse community programs and NYC Public Schools.

MAPP INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS (PRODUCER) was a nonprofit producer of major performing arts projects that raised critical consciousness and inspired social change from 1994 until 2017. MAPP produced and managed international tours of multidisciplinary projects by artists including Ralph Lemon, Nora Chipaumire, Lars Jan, Dean Moss, Emio Greco/ICK Amsterdam, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Yasuko Yokoshi, Okwui Okpokwasili, David Zambrano, Los Munequitos de Matanzas, and many more. It also managed the Africa Contemporary Arts Consortium, supporting and often touring the work of contemporary African dance artists including Gregory Maqoma/Vuyani Dance Theater, Faustin Linyekula, Bouchra Ouizguen, and others.

PERFORMANCEPRACTICE.ORG (MANAGER) is the national touring extension of Los Angeles Performance Practice, a nonprofit organization devoted to the production and presentation of contemporary performance by artists whose work advances and challenges multidisciplinary artistic practices. Founded by Miranda Wright in 2010 and codirected by George Lugg since 2017, its mission is to support a unique and diverse constellation of artists and audiences through the active creation and presentation of groundbreaking experiences that use innovative approaches to collaboration, technology, and social engagement. Anchored in Los Angeles, its artists and projects have national and global reach.



Okwui Okpokwasili, *Poor People's TV Room*. Photo © Ian Douglas.



Okwui Okpokwasili, *Poor People's TV Room*. Photo © Ian Douglas.

DATE NIGHT



Marisol Escobar. Photo: Herman Hiller.

Join us for dinner or drinks before or after the theater at Marisol, named one of the hottest restaurants in Chicago by Zagat and one of *Vogue's* "Six Chicago Restaurants You Should Know About Now." Call 312-799-3599 to make reservations.

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Oct 5-8

Marc Bamuthi Joseph/
The Living Word Project
*/peh-LO-tah/-a futbol
framed freedom suite . . .*

Nov 9-12

Faye Driscoll
*Thank You For
Coming: Play*

Dec 7-10

Twyla Tharp
Minimalism and Me

2018

Jan 25-28

Federico León
Las ideas

Feb 8-11

Claire Cunningham
& Jess Curtis
*The Way You Look
(at me) Tonight*

Apr 6-7

Mind Over Mirrors
Bellowing Sun

Apr 12-15

Okwui Okpokwasili
Poor People's TV Room

May 24-26

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Program notes
compiled by
Tara Aisha Willis

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SUPPORT FOR MCA STAGE

Lead support for the 2017-18 season of MCA Stage is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman.

GENEROUS SUPPORT IS PROVIDED BY:

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Additional generous support for MCA Stage is provided by Enact, the MCA's performance affinity group.

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

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As of March 2018

The MCA's newest affinity group, Enact, is a group of MCA 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, such as intimate gatherings with MCA performance leadership, pre- and post-performance discussions with artists, and behind-the-scenes access to select rehearsals
- Invitation to Season Reveal, an annual preview of the upcoming season
- Opportunities for complimentary drinks and tickets

Circle Donor membership is required to join Enact. Enact dues are an additional \$1,000 annually. For more information, contact us at enact@mcachicago.org.

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ABOUT MCA STAGE

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 the MCA'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 E Chicago Ave) 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

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