

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 2015

Museum of  
Contemporary Art  
Chicago News

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**TSUKASA TAIKO**  
**TAIKO LEGACY 12 AND REDUCTION**  
**December 19-20, 2015**



**MCA Stage** presents **Tsukasa Taiko**, the annual winter series that embraces the lineage of improvisation across time, cultures, and forms—from taiko drumming to free jazz, kimono dance to contemporary movement. The Chicago-based ensemble directed by Tatsu Aoki is joined by music and dance artists from Tokyo, San Francisco, and Chicago for two distinct programs rooted in the sounds of taiko drumming. **Tatsu Aoki** directs both programs. **Taiko Legacy 12**, a perennial favorite of families, is performed on Saturday and Sunday, December 19 and 20, at 3 pm. The evening performance, **Reduction**, takes place on Saturday, December 19, at 7:30 pm. All performances are in the Edlis Neeson Theater at **MCA Stage** and are co-presented with the **Asian Improv aRts Midwest**.

**Taiko Legacy 12** combines improvisation, traditional court music, and dance. Once heard only at traditional ceremonies and temples in Japan, today taiko demonstrates the fullest possibilities of drumming. It is performed by Tsukasa Taiko, celebrated for convening three generations of drummers in its ensemble and representing today's vibrant pan-Asian heritage. The core Japanese aesthetic in authentic taiko and classical instruments and kimono

dance is forefronted in this program, which features the dance art of grandmaster Shunojo Fujima and Yoshinjo Fujima, along with esteemed musical artists from Tokyo, SHINTA (taiko), Chizuru Kineya (shamisen), Kizan Kawamura (bamboo flute), and Takane Umeya (hand drum); San Francisco's Melody Takata and Gen Ensemble; and Douglas R. Ewart.

**Reduction**, the second program, focuses on taiko's central role in the musical experimentation of 1970s Tokyo. Directed by creative artist Tatsu Aoki, this hybrid program draws from Aoki's roots in a well-known artisan family and his role in Tokyo's new wave of performance art. In contrast to *Taiko Legacy*, *Reduction* explores some of the more subtle elements of artistic expression inherent in today's Japanese art forms. Dance improviser Ayako Kato performs alongside formidable creative musicians including Nicole Mitchell on flutes, Ari Brown, Francis Wong, and Douglas R. Ewart on reeds. Hamid Drake and Michael Zerang perform with Eigen Aoki in an extended improvisation set that features taiko snare drums and percussion. Electronics composer Jonathan Chen, from New York, and featured artists from the Taiko Legacy program join this evening event.

**Tatsu Aoki** is a filmmaker, composer, and performer, and an advocate of the Asian-American community. Born in Tokyo in 1957, he was active in the 1970s underground arts movement in Tokyo that combined traditional music and new Western forms. He relocated in 1977 to study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he is an adjunct associate professor in the Film, Video, and New Media Department. Aoki's four-suite *ROOTED: Origins of Now* premiered in 2001 at MCA Stage as part of Chicago Asian American Jazz Festival, which Aoki founded and is in its 17<sup>th</sup> year. His albums *Basser Live* (1999) and *Basser Live II* (2005) were recorded live at the MCA.

**Tsukasa Taiko** is a leading national taiko community ensemble based in Chicago, where it was cofounded by Tatsu Aoki in 1996. It is the largest multigenerational ensemble in the United States, performing in traditional and contemporary forms. The ensemble aims to strengthen Japanese-American/Asian-American communities and reflect a shared culture through taiko performances infused with contemporary expressions.

## TICKET INFORMATION

*Taiko Legacy 12* runs 100 minutes and takes place Saturday, December 19, and Sunday, December 20, at 3 pm. Tickets are \$20, and admission is free for children 12 and under. *Reduction* runs 80 minutes and takes place on Saturday, December 19, at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$20. Tickets are available at the MCA Box Office at 312.397.4010 or [www.mcachicago.org](http://www.mcachicago.org).

## RELATED PROGRAMS

### MCA Screen: Tatsu Aoki | Formalism, Structuralism, and Reduction

Tuesday, December 15, 6 pm

Free with museum admission; admission is free for Illinois residents on Tuesdays year round

Tatsu Aoki has been creating experimental films for more than thirty years, and at this program he pairs selections of his 16mm work with live music performed by Jonathan Chen and Jamie Kempfers. Films include the Chicago premiere of *Page's* (2015) and *Hallway* (1985), *Waiting Room* (1985), *Shape* (1996), and *Gate* (2009).

## PRESS RESOURCES

High resolution images and press releases are available at [www.mcachicago.org/media](http://www.mcachicago.org/media). Visitors are encouraged to use **#MCAStage** to share photos and thoughts with **@mcachicago** on Twitter and Instagram.

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Douglas R. Ewart and Melody Takata with Tsukasa Taiko, *Reduction* Photo: Ken Carl

Generous support for MCA Dance is provided by David Herro and Jay Franke.

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