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A 24-DECADE HISTORY OF POPULAR MUSIC: 1956-1986

Conceived, written, performed and co-directed by

TAYLOR MAC

April 12 and 14-16, 2016



The **Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago** presents **Taylor Mac's A 24-Decade History of Popular Music: 1956-1986**. A full band and Detroit-based singers **Thornetta Davis** and **Steffanie Christian** join Mac for the performances, which span three decades and are a part of Mac's ambitious, multi-year effort to chart the history of popular music in America, from the nation's founding in 1776 to the present day. At the MCA, Mac will cover the formative periods of the Civil Rights Movement, gay liberation, and disco. *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music: 1956-1986* takes place April 12 - 16, 2016 at the MCA's Edlis Neeson Theater.

A 24-Decade History of Popular Music combines musical theater, drag performance, and historical storytelling. Mac performs songs spanning the history of America, with approximately one hour of performance—and a corresponding costume by longtime Mac collaborator Machine Dazzle—dedicated to each decade. Mac will stitch these decade-specific performances together in the 24-hour-long extravaganza planned for New York City this fall, in which Mac will be joined by a 24-piece orchestra, dancers and an array of special guests.

The three decades that Mac performs at the MCA consist of:

- 1956-1966, “Songs Popular on the Bus to the March on Washington” is about the 1963 March on Washington, one of the largest nonviolent protests ever held in the US.
- 1966-1976, “Songs Popular during the Stonewall Riots” is about the uprising at the Stonewall Inn in New York—widely seen as a turning point that led to the gay liberation movement.
- 1976-1986, “Songs Popular in the Backroom” is about the time when disco classics, original funk, and 80s music shaped nightlife.

A 24-Decade History of Popular Music is conceived, written, performed, and co-directed by Taylor Mac. Collaborators include Music Director Matt Ray, Co-Director Niegel Smith, costume designer Machine Dazzle, Dramaturg Jocelyn Clarke, Lighting Designer John Torres, Executive Producer Linda Brumbach, and Associate Producers Kaleb Kilkenny and Alisa E. Regas. MCA Stage first introduced its audiences to Taylor Mac in September 2013 with *An Abridged Concert of The History of Political Popular Music*.

Taylor Mac (who prefers the gender pronoun *judy*) has garnered acclaim as a playwright, actor, singer-songwriter, cabaret performer, performance artist, director and producer, for work ranging from Mac’s OBIE Award-winning piece *The Lily’s Revenge* to Mac’s critically lauded collaboration with Mandy Patinkin, Susan Stroman and Paul Ford, *The Last Two People On Earth: An Apocalyptic Vaudeville*, which co-stars Mac and Patinkin. Mac made many top critics’ Best Theater of 2015 lists for *Hir*, a dark comedy that made its New York premiere at Playwrights Horizons in the fall.

TICKET INFORMATION

A 24-Decade History of Popular Music: 1956-1986 takes place April 12, 14, 15, and 16 at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$30 and available at the MCA Box Office at 312.397.4010 or www.mcachicago.org. The performance runs three hours.

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Image: Taylor Mac, Photo: Kevin Yatarola

A 24-Decade History of Popular Music is commissioned in part by Belfast International Arts Festival and 14 - 18 NOW; Carole Shorenstein Hays, Curran Theatre, San Francisco; Carolina Performing Arts at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA; Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts;

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; International Festival of Arts & Ideas; New York Live Arts; OZ Arts Nashville; University Musical Society at the University of Michigan.

This work was developed with the support of the Park Avenue Armory Artist-in-Residence program and the 2015 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at the Sundance Mountain Resort, with continuing post-lab dramaturgical support through its initiative with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies, including the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Museum capital improvements are supported by a Public Museum Capital Grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District. The MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue, one block east of Michigan Avenue. The museum and sculpture garden are open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm and Tuesday from 10 am to 8 pm. The museum is closed on Monday. Tuesdays are Community Free Days with free admission for Illinois residents. Suggested general admission is \$12 for adults and \$7 for students and seniors. Children 12 years of age and under, MCA members, and members of the military are admitted free. Information about MCA exhibitions, programs, and special events is available on the MCA website at mcachicago.org or by phone at 312.280.2660.