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TRIPTYCH OF PLAYS POKES FUN AT ABSURD OFFICE MANNERISMS

Internationally-Celebrated Japanese Theater Company Performs at Kelly Strayhorn Theater on September 28 & 29

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Hot Pepper, Air Conditioner and the Farewell Speech captures the malaise of young low-level office workers in three quirky short plays set in an office break room. In the sharp and visually-vibrant world, six 20-something co-workers wrestle with issues as mundane as selecting a restaurant for lunch or the temperature of the office.

The Pittsburgh premiere of *Hot Pepper, Air Conditioner and the Farewell Speech* will be performed at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater on Friday, September 28 & Saturday, September 29 at 8 pm by **chelfitsch Theater Company**. A one-hour artSEEDS matinee program that includes a Q&A with the artists will be presented for high school students on Friday, September 28 at 10 am.

Writer-director Toshiki Okada mixes dark humor, absurdity, and a distinct musical backdrop of John Coltrane, Stereolab and John Cage to capture the empty and ungrounded nature of Generation Y. Characterized by a seemingly insubstantial narrative accompanied by exaggerated gestures-turned-choreography, the groundbreaking works of chelfitsch have drawn global recognition, making them a leading theater/movement company in Japan and abroad. While the trio of plays is in Japanese with English subtitles, the expressive physicality of the actors requires no translation.

Born in Yokohama in 1973, Toshiki Okada is a celebrated chronicler of Japan's Generation Y. He formed the chelfitsch Theater Company in 1997. Since then he has written and directed all of the company's productions, practicing a distinctive methodology for creating plays, and has come to be known for his use of hyper-colloquial Japanese and unique choreography. Over the years, several of his plays, including *Air Conditioner*, have won the prestigious awards.

The tour of chelfitsch Theater Company is made possible by a grant from Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation with support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"chelfitsch Theater Company has a great and growing reputation as a creative, engaging force in the theater world. We look forward to welcoming them to Pittsburgh for this premiere," Janera Solomon, Executive Director of KST said.

The audience is invited to a free pre-show mixer on both nights and the performers will participate in a post-show talk with the audience on Friday evening.

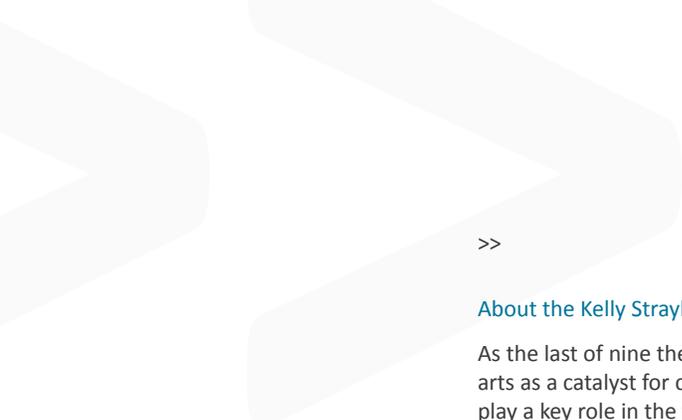
TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Advance \$25 | Door \$35 | Residents of 15206 Zip code \$20 | Student/Artist \$15 in Advance

Tickets are available on the web site and may be purchased in advance by visiting www.kelly-strayhorn.org or by calling 412 363-3000. Kelly Strayhorn Theater is located at 5941 Penn Avenue in East Liberty.



Photos by Toru Yokota
 [performer names available on request]



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About the Kelly Strayhorn Theater

As the last of nine theaters from the 1950s heyday of East Liberty, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater uses the arts as a catalyst for continuing community revitalization. The theater, in its 12th season, continues to play a key role in the transformation of Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. An intimate, professionally equipped, 349-seat multiple-use performance venue, the theater demonstrates its commitment to Pittsburgh artists and audiences. The KST is a favorite venue of emerging local artists, regional artists and arts organizations who take risks and present new work. Noted Pittsburghers Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn, the namesakes, are among the 80 area artists honored on the theater's Gallery of Stars. The building, opened in 1919, is the former Regent Theatre, which served the East End as a movie house for eight decades.

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