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Baltimore Center Stage Announces Cast and Artistic Team for *The White Snake*

Baltimore—February 10, 2017. Baltimore Center Stage is pleased to announce the cast and artistic team for *The White Snake*. Opening Night of *The White Snake*, March 3, will mark the grand reopening of the theater after its \$28 million renovation. *The White Snake* will be the debut production in Baltimore Center Stage's completely redesigned Head Theater.

"We are so excited to open our doors and welcome the community as they experience our remarkable transformation," said Baltimore Center Stage Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah. "We chose Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of *The White Snake* as the first production in our completely redesigned Head Theater because it is a visually stunning piece. I know our audiences will be swept away with delight."

Mystery and magic intertwine in this fantastical tale brought to life in grand spectacle in the newly renovated Head Theater. Originating from an ancient Chinese fable, *The White Snake* tells the story of animal spirits White Snake and Green Snake, who take human form as a beautiful woman and her sly servant. White Snake soon falls passionately in love with a poor pharmacist's assistant, but their relationship is reviled by a conservative monk and tragedy lurks behind their newfound happiness.

Adapted by the award-winning playwright Mary Zimmerman—known for her stage adaptations of *Metamorphoses*, *The Odyssey* and *The Jungle Book*, and for Metropolitan Opera productions of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Armida*, *La Sonnambula* and the this year's *Rusalka*—this production of *The White Snake* will be directed by Natsu Onoda Power, a Washington, DC-based author, playwright, director, designer and professor.

Power's recent directing credits include *Wind Me Up*, *Maria! A Go-Go Musical* at Georgetown University; *The T Party* (which she also wrote) at Forum Theatre and Company One Theater Boston; *A Trip to the Moon* (which she wrote and illustrated) at Synetic Theatre; and the Elliot Norton Award-winning *Astro Boy and the God of Comics* (which she wrote) at Studio Theatre and Company One Theatre. She is also an associate professor in Georgetown's Theater and Performance Studies program and the author of *God of Comics: Osamu Tezuka and the Creation of Post World War II Manga*.

“The power of this story is that it transcends everything that divides us, culturally, historically, politically,” said Power. “It is important to me, however, that we do not simply call the story ‘universal’— because that sounds like a move to ignore all cultural specificity and differences. It is the opposite: the characters clearly see their differences, and still make the commitment to love the other person, whatever it entails.”

The cast includes **Aimé Donn Kelly*** (White Snake), **Eileen Rivera*** (Green Snake), **Joe Ngo*** (Xu Xian), **Peter Van Wagner*** (Fa Hai), **Caitlin Cisco*** (Ensemble), **Samy el-Noury** (Ensemble), **Lucy Lavelly*** (Ensemble), **Brett Messiora** (Ensemble), **Pooya Mohseni*** (Ensemble), **Linden Tailor*** (Ensemble), **Damian Thompson*** (Ensemble), **Jason Kao Hwang** (Actor-Musician/Composer – violin/viola), **Joshua Ziemann** (Actor-Musician/Composer – marimba, percussion), **Yukio Tsuji** (Actor-Musician/Composer – shakuhachi, percussion).

The artistic team includes **Mary Zimmerman** (Playwright), **Natsu Onoda Power** (Director), **Jeff Song** (Actor-Musician/Musician/Music Director/Composer), **Hana S. Kim** (Scenic and Projection Designer), **Nicole Wee** (Costume Designer), **Rui Rita** (Lighting Designer), **Alex Hawthorn** (Sound Designer), **Andrea “Dre” Moore** (Puppet Designer and Constructor), **Tommy Kurzman** (Hair, Wig & Makeup Design), **Rick Sordelet** (Fight Director), **Deanie Vallone** (Production Dramaturg), **Stephanie Klapper** (Casting Director), **Larry Smiglewski*** (Stage Manager) and **Alison Kochman*** (Assistant Stage Manager).

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association

The White Snake opens Friday, March 3, with previews Feb. 24 to March 2, and closes Sunday, March 26. For more information, visit www.centerstage.org or call the box office at 410.332.0033. Press night is Friday, March 3.’

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About Baltimore Center Stage

Baltimore Center Stage is a professional, nonprofit institution committed to entertaining, engaging and enriching audiences through bold, innovative and thought-provoking classical and contemporary theater.

Named the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage has steadily grown as a leader in the national regional theater scene. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE and Managing Director Michael Ross, Baltimore Center Stage is committed to creating and presenting a diverse array of world premieres and exhilarating interpretations of established works.

Baltimore Center Stage believes in access for all—creating a welcoming environment for everyone who enters its theater doors and, at the same time, striving to meet audiences where they are. In addition to its Mainstage, Off Center and Family Series productions in the historic Mount Vernon neighborhood, Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations among a global audience through digital initiatives, which explore how technology and the arts intersect. The theater also nurtures the next generation of artists and theatergoers through the Young Playwrights Festival, Student Matinee Series and many other educational programs for students, families and professionals.

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