



THE WORKSHOP OF LAB410'S

# **CANTON WATERFRONT**

WRITTEN BY KAREN LI

DIRECTED BY PETER J. KUO

**BALTIMORE  
CENTER  
STAGE**

**AUG 16 & 17, 2025**

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## Honor Native Land

Responding to a call from our Indigenous colleagues, collaborators, and neighbors, Baltimore Center Stage is working toward building meaningful and accountable relationships with the land we occupy. As a first step on this path, you'll see a land acknowledgement in each of our programs. Acknowledgement is itself a small gesture, and we look forward to continuing our efforts toward decolonization in a meaningful way. If you're interested in more information feel free to visit the US Department of Arts and Culture's "Honor Native Land" guide.

Baltimore Center Stage acknowledges that the land beneath us, this place, this community, owes its vitality to generations who have come before. Some were brought forcibly to this land, some came here in search of ownership or simply a better life, and some have lived and stewarded this land for countless generations. In a spirit of making erased histories visible, we acknowledge that we are standing on the ancestral and occupied lands of the Piscataway peoples. The Susquehannock, Lenape, and Lumbee peoples have also cared for this land. These peoples are not relics of the past. They continue to steward this land today with care, vitality, and tradition. Their relations are numerous throughout Turtle Island, and they continue to grow. We pay respects to their elders: past, present, and future. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events.

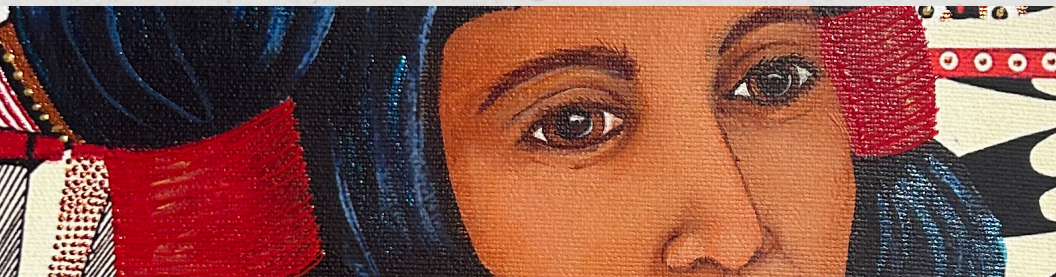
Additionally, in the spirit of reconciliation, you can honor the Indigenous peoples of this land by donating to Native American Lifelines, donating to or visiting the Baltimore American Indian Center & Heritage Museum, and supporting local Indigenous artists. These are only a few suggestions of the many ways we can move towards reconciliation.



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THE WORKSHOP OF LAB410'S

# CANTON WATERFRONT

WRITTEN BY KAREN LI

DIRECTED BY PETER J. KUO

**AUGUST 16 & 17, 2025**

## CAST

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MONICA HO\*  
BONNIE SHEK

VANESSA KAI\*  
CYNTHIA TAM

WHIT K. LEE\*  
KEISUN SHEK/MATT ZHANG

JOE NGO\*  
KEIHEEN SHEK

DWAYNE ALISTAIR THOMAS\*  
QUENTIN MELLING III

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*Karen Li's Canton Waterfront*  
originally appeared as a part of  
Baltimore Center Stage's new  
playwriting residency Lab410 and  
was presented at BCS' inaugural  
Lab410 Fest alongside other new  
works developed during the program.

## THE CREATIVE TEAM

---

KAREN LI  
PLAYWRIGHT

PETER J. KUO  
DIRECTOR

ALEXIS E. DAVIS\*  
STAGE MANAGER

AVON HAUGHTON  
DRAMATURG

BRIAN JAMAL MARSHALL  
SCENIC DESIGNER

FREDERICK P. DEEBEN  
COSTUME DESIGNER

LARRY PETERSON  
HAIR/WIG/MAKEUP DESIGNER

MICHAEL LOGUE  
LIGHTING DESIGNER

ERIC DENSON  
SOUND DESIGNER

JESSIE COMBEST  
PROPERTIES DESIGNER

TYRELL STANLEY  
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT



**MONICA HO\***  
**BONNIE SHEK**  
 Monica is delighted to take part in Baltimore Center Stage's reading of *CANTON WATERFRONT*. She is a graduate of the

American Conservatory Theater MFA program, class of 2020. Monica grew up in the SF Bay Area and is now based in Brooklyn. Off-Broadway credits: *IN CORPO* (The Assembly/Dutch Kills Theater). Broadway nat'l tour credits: *A Christmas Carol* (BroadwaySF). Regional credits: *The Great Leap* (San Jose Stage); *The Song of Summer* (SF Playhouse); *Top Girls* (American Conservatory Theater); and *The Good Person of Szechuan* (California Shakespeare Theater). She is immensely thankful to her community and to Forte Artist Management for their support. @Monica\_Gardeningtool



**VANESSA KAI\***  
**CYNTHIA TAM**  
 Vanessa Kai is best known for her performance as Pei-ling Zhang for 3 seasons on the CW hit series "Kung Fu" – the

reimagining of the "Kung Fu" original series starring David Carradine. Most recently, Vanessa Kai has appeared in a recurring role as Gisela Mott on "Elsbeth" (CBS). Off-Broadway: notable credits include world premieres of *KPOP* (Lucille Lortel Nomination, Best Featured Actress in a Musical), *The Pain of My Belligerence* (Playwrights Horizons), *Somebody's Daughter* (Second Stage) and *The Architecture of Becoming* (WP Theater at NY City Center). Select Regional Theaters: Baltimore Center Stage, The Huntington, Seattle Repertory Theater. Additional Television: "New Amsterdam,"

"The Mysteries of Laura," "Orange Is the New Black," "Gotham," "The Blacklist." Vanessa Kai is repped by Artists & Representatives and CLA Partners. [www.vanessakai.com](http://www.vanessakai.com)



**WHIT K. LEE\***  
**KEISUN SHEK/MATT ZHANG**

OFF-BROADWAY:  
 Atlantic Theatre Company - *The Far Country*; Classic Stage Company - *Assassins*.

REGIONAL THEATRE: Steppenwolf - *The Doppelgänger*; Capitol Rep - *Secret Hour*; Actors Theatre of Louisville - *A Christmas*; Carol Berkeley Rep - *The Far Country*; S.F. Playhouse - *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. TV: "Blue Bloods," "FBI: Most Wanted," "Beyond," "Kaleidoscope," "Law & Order SVU," "Orange Is the New Black." FILM: *Wall Street English* (80 episode sitcom), *Grounded*. Thank you to my dream team, Manager, Susan Campochiaro Confrey - CBU Management & Agent, JC William Agency for their love and support.



**JOE NGO\***  
**KEIHEEN SHEK**  
 Baltimore Center Stage: *The White Snake, King of the Yees*; Off-Broadway: *Cambodian Rock Band* (Signature/ NYC) Regional:

*Cambodian Rock Band* (South Coast, Berkeley Rep, The Alley, ACT/Seattle, Arena Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, East West Players), *What You Are Now* (Merrimack Rep), *The Old Man and the Old Moon* (South Coast), *King of the Yees* (ACT/Seattle), *Vietgone* (Studio Theatre, DC), *All's Well that Ends Well* (OSF), *Mlima's Tale* (Rep. St. Louis). Film: *Funan* (V/O) TV: "Crashing" (HBO)

# BIOGRAPHIES

Education: CSU - Pomona, UW - Seattle.  
Awards: OBIE (2020), Hayes Award (2024)

Joe-Ngo.com IG: @Joengoinsta



**DWAYNE\*  
ALSTAIR THOMAS  
QUENTIN MELLING III**

Dwayne was recently seen in the Baltimore Center Stage's production of *Akeelah and the Bee*. His TV

credits include "We Own This City" (HBO), "Bad Monkey" (Apple TV), "The Americans" (FX), and "Hightown" (Starz). Other selected regional theater credits include Bristol Riverside Theatre, Theatre Horizon, and InterAct Theatre. As a multifaceted creative, Dwayne's artwork can be seen at the National Harbor Galley Arts' tination, and his sound design has been featured in many regional theater productions across the East Coast. Eternal thanks to his family and BCS for always providing love and support.



**KAREN LI  
PLAYWRIGHT**  
Karen Li (She/Her) is a Baltimore-based performer with a Theatre and Dance double degree from UC San Diego. She was

a playwright in residence at Baltimore Center Stage in the inaugural year of the Lab410 program, and also appeared onstage at BCS in the ensemble of the Young Playwrights Festival '24. Karen is a collective member of Submersive Productions and a member of the Horticulture Playwrights Workshop '24 cohort with Sisters Freehold. Recent DMV area credits include *Exclusion* (Arena Stage), *Babel* (Contemporary American Theater Festival), *AAPI Voices* (Kennedy Center), *Boundary*

(Submersive Productions), *Black Super Hero Magic Mama* (Strand Theater), and *alight, sweet hearted* (Strand Theater). Off-Broadway: *The Rice Eaters* (AMT Theater). Regional: *Twelfth Night* (TheatreSquared), *The Great Leap* (Perseverance Theatre), and *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots* (La Jolla Playhouse). TV: "Dancing with the Stars" (ABC).



**PETER J. KUO  
DIRECTOR**

PETER J. KUO is a theater director, producer, writer, and educator focusing on raising the visibility of marginalized

communities. Currently, he is the Director of the Conservatory at American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.). Named as one of TCG's Rising Leaders of Color in the Round 3 cohort, he is also a co-founder of Artists at Play, an Asian American theatre collective that produces Los Angeles premieres. For Artists at Play, he directed their inaugural production of Lauren Yee's *Ching Chong Chinaman* (Backstage Critic's Pick), and Michael Golamco's *Cowboy Versus Samurai*. Favorite directing credits: Christopher Chen's *MUTT: Let's All Talk About Race!*, Adam Gwon's *Ordinary Days*, Jackie Sibbles-Drury's *We Are Proud to Present...*, and Jason Robert Brown's *Songs for a New World*. As a director he has worked nationally; in multiple states on both coasts and through the Midwest. He holds an M.F.A. in directing from The New School, College of Performing Arts, School of Drama.

**ALEXIS E. DAVIS\*  
STAGE MANAGER**

Alexis E. Davis stage management credits include Joe Turner's *Come and Gone*, *The Oresteia*, *Twelfth Night*, *A*

*Raisin in the Sun* (and many more) with Chesapeake Shakespeare Company. Additional PSM credits include *A Beginner's Guide to Deicide* (Single Carrot Theater) and *Drunk Enough to Say, I Love You* (Single Carrot Theater). Additional ASM and PA credits include *John Wilkes Booth: One Night Only!* (Baltimore Center Stage); *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* (Baltimore Center Stage); *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*; (Everyman Theater); *TopDog/Underdog* (Everyman Theater); *God of Carnage* (Everyman Theatre). *Wild! With Happy!* (Baltimore Center Stage). Alexis holds a BFA in Theater Production from McDaniel College. She is the Associate Production Manager at BCS and an Artistic Company Member at Chesapeake Shakespeare Company. She is also a member of the Actor's Equity Association and Stage Managers' Association.

**AVON HAUGHTON**  
**DRAMATURG**

Avon Haughton is a dramaturg, film/television writer, and current steward of Baltimore Center Stage's new works program. He is of the belief that narrative is integral to the function and preservation of community. Born and raised in Baltimore, Avon grew up attending shows at Baltimore Center Stage and is now thrilled to help shape the narratives that are developed and produced here at BCS. After the success of our theater's inaugural Lab410 residency, Avon is thrilled to present Karen Li's *Canton Waterfront*. See you at our next 410Fest where we'll present three new plays from this season's Lab410 cohort!

**BRIAN JAMAL MARSHALL**  
**SCENIC DESIGNER**

His previous designs include productions of *A Love That Lasts*, *The Wiz* (twice!), *Dreamgirls*, *Reparations*, *The*

*Piano Lesson*. He is a proud graduate of Baltimore School for the Arts and as Master Carpenter has been on staff at BCS for 11 seasons.

**FREDERICK P. DEEBEN**  
**COSTUME DESIGNER**

Frederick P. Deeben (he/him) is currently the Costume Director at Baltimore Center Stage. Recent designs include *No Place to Go* and *Midnight at the Never Get* at Signature Theatre in Arlington VA. Fred also created costumes for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and *Passage* at Johns Hopkins University Theater this past year. He has previously worked at other venues and theaters across the country including The Pacific Conservatory Theatre (PCPA), The Western Stage, Sierra Repertory Theatre, Pacific Repertory Opera, The Glimmerglass Opera Festival, SurfFlight Theatre and The Hangar Theater. Favorite past designs include Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (world premiere), *Les Misérables*, *Hairspray*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *The Music Man*, *Three Sisters*, *The Rivals*, *The Wildest* (world premiere) and *Monty Python's Spamalot*. Originally from Sunbury PA, Fred received his BA in Art at Gettysburg College and his MFA in Design and Technical Theatre at Syracuse University.

**LARRY PETERSON**  
**HAIR/WIG/MAKEUP DESIGNER**

Larry Peterson (he/him) studied theatrical hair and makeup at Howard University. Larry has a passion for the arts and he has over 15 years of experience in makeup artistry, hair/wig design, and costuming. He has partnered with Screaming Queens Productions LLC, BlackRock Center for the Arts, and other performance venues as a performer and hair/makeup designer. Larry has worked as the Wig Designer in the productions

of *Kinky Boots*, *Lend Me a Soprano*, and *Beautiful* at Olney Theatre Center; *Cinderella*, *Akeelah and the Bee*, and *John Wilkes Booth: One Night Only!* at Baltimore Center Stage; and *The World Goes Round* at Everyman Theatre. Larry is excited to bring his wide array of experience and creative skills back to Baltimore Center Stage for *Canton Waterfront*. [www.Gastonblue.com](http://www.Gastonblue.com)

## MICHAEL LOGUE LIGHTING DESIGNER

Michael Logue (he/they) has been employed at Baltimore Centerstage for 7 years, currently serving as the Lead Electrician and Lighting Programmer. He graduated with a B.A. in Theatre and Dance from The University of Texas at Austin, with emphasis on both Lighting Design and Stage Management. He has designed for a number of local theaters in both Austin and in Baltimore, on shows including *Perfect Arrangement* and *The Mineola Twins* at Fells Point Corner Theater in Baltimore, *As You Like It* at City Theater in Austin, and *This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing* as part of The University of Texas's New Theater Festival, as well as serving as associate designer for *Little Shop of Horrors* at Stevenson University. They have also designed for several events at Baltimore Center Stage, including the theater's annual Gala.

## ERIC DENSON SOUND DESIGNER

Eric "Barry" Denson is a producer and live sound engineer for Baltimore Center Stage and Bethel AME Church. Eric has produced for many local artists, including: DENSON., Samoris, Kae Roshon, SixTheDJ, Barmelo, Najee, APoetNamedNate, and GREEYO. He has also done live sound for gospel greats such as Maurette Brown Clark, Byron Cage, Anthony Brown, Stephen Hurd, and more!

Credits: BCS Young Playwrights Festival '24, ArtsCentric's *Black Nativity*

Education: Frostburg State University

## JESSIE COMBEST PROPERTIES DESIGNER

Jessie Combest (she/her) is currently working at Baltimore Center Stage as the Assistant Properties Manager. Previous prop master works onstage here at BCS include The 40th Anniversary Young Playwrights Festival and *Akeelah and the Bee*. She previously worked in Kentucky at Actors Theatre of Louisville for over a decade where she worked on numerous new play work during the Humana Festival of New American Plays, The Young Playwright's Festival, and the Apprentice/Intern Ten Minute Festival.

## TYRELL STANLEY PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Tyrell Stanley, a multifaceted performing Artist, Creative, and Designer from Baltimore, Maryland. Recent theatrical credits: *Cinderella: A Salsa Fairytale* (Imagination Stage) *The Scottsboro Boys*, *Once On this Island*, *Cinderella*, *For Colored Girls*, *RENT* (ArtsCentric); *Kinky Boots*, *FELA* (Olney Theater Center); *Everything That Never Happened*, *Folks at Home*, *Young Playwright's Festival '22* (Baltimore CenterStage); *Dani Stoller's The Pursued*, *The Pursuing*, *The Busy*, and *The Tired* (Signature Theater); *Godspell* (Phoenix Festival Theater); *Disney's Descendants*, *Newsies*, *Mean Girls*, *Hairspray* (Children's Playhouse of MD) His artistry continues to shine through his work on & off the stage. Instagram: @stagerighttt

## ABOUT LAB410

As part of Baltimore Center Stage's dedication to making art and cultivating artists in and around our beautiful city of Baltimore, Lab410, our playwright's residency for local writers, is grounded in our belief that our city is one of the world's greatest arts incubators. Every production we do starts with an idea, perhaps expressed in words, mostly in the form of scripts, and Lab410 gives us the chance to cultivate some of the world's best works of theater right here at home. We believe the diversity, terrain, and depth of Baltimore's culture deserves the best platforms, and this season-long playwriting residency is just one of the ways we plan to put Baltimore on the world stage. Last year's cohort worked tirelessly, shaping new plays and readying them for our inaugural 410Fest. It is important that these plays are presented to our community before they are presented to the world in perpetuity. Our fellowship, our laughs, and our applause, right here at Baltimore Center Stage, is the exact force that catapults new works into the realm of classics. Thank you for being part of what makes theatre great. Be on the lookout for an announcement of Lab410's 2025/26 cohort! Learn more about us at [centerstage.org/lab410](http://centerstage.org/lab410)

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\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



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Founded in 1963 and designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage provides the highest quality theater and programming for all members of our communities, including youth and families, under the leadership of Artistic Director Stevie Walker-Webb and Managing Director Adam Frank. Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages and an intimate 99-seat theater, through engaging community programs, and with inspiring education programs. Everything we do at Center Stage is led by our core values—chief among them being Access For All. Our mission is heavily rooted in providing active and open accessibility for everyone, regardless of any and all barriers, to our Mainstage performances, education initiatives, and community programming.



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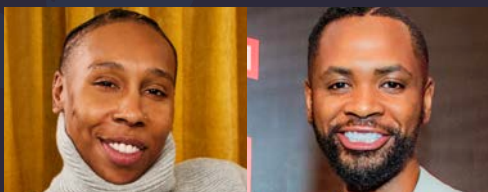
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**HOLES**

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY  
LOUIS SACHAR

DIRECTED BY JOHANNA GRUENHUT



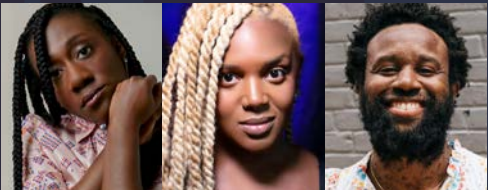
**JUN 13 - JUL 5, 2026**

**(pray)**

a sacred offering created by nicHi douglas

with music by STARR Busby &  
JJJJJerome Ellis

directed & choreographed by nicHi douglas



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