



**BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE  
ANNOUNCES POWERFUL 2025/26 SEASON**

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**PRESS INQUIRIES**

[JRM@JRMCONSULTANCY.COM](mailto:JRM@JRMCONSULTANCY.COM)

**BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE ANNOUNCES POWERFUL 2025/26 SEASON**

*A Bold Offering of Entertaining and Moving Socially Conscious Works, A Family Adventure Classic, and Two World Premieres including a Sparkling Holiday Musical Concert*

**Baltimore, MD** —Following a 2024/25 season that has seen a more than 40% increase in annual attendance and refocused the national spotlight on our community, **Baltimore Center Stage (BCS)** proudly unveils its much-anticipated **2025/26 season**—a vibrant, visionary lineup that champions powerful storytelling, dynamic performances, and boundary-pushing productions.

The second season curated by Artistic Director Stevie Walker-Webb, this slate of five new-to-Baltimore productions solidifies BCS as one of the most daring and dynamic theater companies in the nation.

“This season is a love letter to Baltimore and a call to audiences everywhere who believe theater should move the soul, stir the conscience, and lift the spirit,” says Walker-Webb. “Every

production deepens our commitment to joyful storytelling, radical hospitality, and community-rooted artmaking. And trust—there’s truly something for everyone: two plays with music and dance, a beloved blockbuster for families and kids of all ages, and a high-octane world premiere that’s two parts romance, one part sci-fi, and all heart.”

A celebration of imagination, social urgency, and artistic brilliance, the 2025/26 season kicks off October 15 with ***The Peculiar Patriot***, written and performed by Liza Jessie Peterson and directed by Talvin Wilks. This fearlessly funny, smart, provocative show is also timely and urgent as it unpacks the human impact of mass incarceration in America.

In December, BCS will treat Baltimore to the world premiere of ***Santa Claus Is Comin': A Motown Christmas Revue***, written by Nygel D. Robinson, the co-creator and co-star of BCS’ hit *Mexodus*. Directed and choreographed jointly by Ken-Matt Martin and Victor Musoni, this spirited show features classic holiday favorites, reimagined with the unmistakable sound of Motown legends—from Smokey Robinson to The Supremes.

In February 2026, BCS, in association with Hillman Grad, presents its second world premiere of the season: ***Trinity***, a searing, intimate drama by Emmy Award winner Lena Waithe, marking her theatrical playwriting debut. This raw, unflinching drama also represents a significant milestone in her collaboration with BCS Artistic Director Stevie Walker-Webb, who will direct the production.

In April 2026 BCS opens ***Holes***, adapted from the beloved Newbery Medal and National Book Award-winning novel by Louis Sachar, directed by Johanna Gruenhut. A thrilling ride for audiences of all ages, *Holes* is part mystery and part adventure, filling the stage with theatrical wonder and grit.

The final production of the season is ***(pray)***, running June and July of 2026. Written, directed, and choreographed by nicHi douglas, with music by S T A R R Busby & JJJJJerome Ellis, this boundary-busting choreopoem is a kinetic and vibrant evening of song, dance, and fellowship, giving audiences the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs.

The season will also feature public presentations of plays in development, giving audiences access to groundbreaking new stories as Baltimore Center Stage establishes itself as a national leader in supporting playwrights. The first in this series, presented in August 2025, will be ***Canton Waterfront*** by Baltimore’s own Karen Li. A story of immigrant life in Baltimore and the city’s trade connection with China going back hundreds of years, *Canton Waterfront* was developed in Lab410, Baltimore Center Stage’s local playwright’s residency.

## **2025/26 Season Performances:**

### **THE PECULIAR PATRIOT**

**October 15 – November 9, 2025 | Opening Night: October 18, 2025**

Playwright: Liza Jessie Peterson

Director: Talvin Wilks

Inspired by her decades-long work with prison populations, including on the notorious Rikers Island, Liza Jessie Peterson's timely and urgent one-person show unpacks the human impact of mass incarceration in America. Fearlessly funny, smart and provocative, *The Peculiar Patriot* traces the migration of systemic injustice from the plantation to the prison yard.

Betsy LaQuanda Ross is a self-proclaimed "peculiar patriot," who makes regular visits to penitentiaries to boost the morale of her incarcerated friends and family. Betsy is both victim and victor of this country's prison system and her story turns statistics into achingly relatable stories, drawn from the experience of more than 2.5 million people behind bars. *The Peculiar Patriot* is "nothing less than extraordinary" (*Broadway World*).

The play was developed beginning in 2003 with performances in more than 35 penitentiaries across the U.S. and incubation at Hi-ARTS in 2016. Hi-ARTS and National Black Theatre joined forces to produce the acclaimed world premiere in September 2017, working with more than 10 grass-roots organizations in criminal justice to help empower and inform the community. As BCS expands its own work making theater with incarcerated youth, the theater is proud to bring this important work to Baltimore.

- Outstanding Solo Performance Nominee—Drama Desk Award
- Outstanding Set Design Nominee—Drama Desk Award
- Outstanding Solo Performance Nominee—Elliot Norton Award

### **SANTA CLAUS IS COMIN': A MOTOWN CHRISTMAS REVUE (World Premiere)**

**November 26, 2025 – January 4, 2026 | Opening Night: December 6**

Playwright: Nygel D. Robinson

Co-Directors & Co-Choreographers: Ken-Matt Martin and Victor Musoni

Deck the halls and jingle *all* the bells! This holiday season, join us for an upbeat, heartwarming evening of Motown magic!

*Santa Claus Is Comin'* is a dazzling, family-friendly musical concert celebration by Nygel D. Robinson, the powerhouse performer and co-creator of last season's breakout hit *Mexodus*. Packed with heart and groove, this spirited show features classic holiday favorites, reimagined with the unmistakable sound of Motown legends—from Smokey Robinson to The Supremes.

Whether you're bringing kids, coworkers, grandparents, or that one cousin who *lives* for a dance break—this is the holiday party you don't want to miss.

### **TRINITY (World Premiere)**

**Presented in Association with Hillman Grad**

**February 12 – March 8, 2026 | Opening Night: February 21**

Playwright: Lena Waithe

Director: Stevie Walker-Webb

**Emmy Award–winning writer and producer Lena Waithe** (*Master of None*, *The Chi*) makes her **playwriting debut** with *Trinity*—a bold, intimate, and genre-defying exploration of love, identity, and the power of imagination.

In a single room, three women slip between fantasy and reality, acting out the moments they're too afraid to live in real life. What begins as playful role-play becomes a raw excavation of longing, connection, and the emotional legacies passed between mothers, sisters, and lovers.

Blending the sharp wit of a romantic comedy with the searching depth of an existential drama, *Trinity* is a lyrical, layered portrait of womanhood that's as funny as it is fearless. As NPR so aptly put it, "Waithe's TV shows and films are powerful empathy engines"—and *Trinity* brings that same emotional truth to the stage. Directed by BCS Artistic Director Stevie Walker-Webb, you'll want to see it more than once to catch every subtle shift, every emotional turn, and every truth just beneath the surface.

### **HOLES**

**April 16 – May 10, 2026 | Opening Night: April 25**

Playwright: *Adapted from the beloved novel by Louis Sachar*

Director: Johanna Gruenhut

Based on the beloved Newbery Medal- and National Book Award-winning novel—and the hit 2003 film starring Shia LaBeouf, Sigourney Weaver, and Jon Voight—this theatrical adaptation is a thrilling ride for audiences of all ages. When teenager Stanley Yelnats is hit by a pair of falling sneakers, his unlucky family curse strikes again. Wrongly convicted of stealing the sneakers and sent to the mysterious Camp Green Lake, Stanley joins a ragtag group of boys digging endless holes under the blistering sun—all in the name of building character. But as the layers of dirt pile up, so do the secrets buried beneath them. Part mystery, part adventure, and packed with heart, *Holes* is a wildly imaginative tale about friendship, fate, and the courage it takes to rewrite your story. *Holes* is "a fast-paced and inventive family show that works on every level" (*The Stage*).

- 1998 National Book Award for Young People's Literature
- 1999 Newbery Medal
- 1999 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Fiction

**(pray)**

**June 13 – July 5, 2026 | Opening Night: June 20**

Playwright & Director: niHi douglas

Music by: S T A R R Busby & JJJJJerome Ellis

Choreographer: niHi douglas

Channeling the energy and vitality of a Sunday Baptist Church service, this kinetic and vibrant choreopoem celebrates and confronts the complexity of spiritual inheritance. Join this multigenerational congregation of Black womxn and femmes for an evening of song, dance, fellowship and the opportunity to reflect on your own beliefs.

“Transcendent, paradoxical & joyous! *(pray)* is an exploration of how faith intersects with Black womanhood through a mix of music, movement, ritual & poetry. Let’s call this a house of song & praise — yahleloo!” Maya Phillips, *The New York Times*

BCS is proud to announce that this coming year will also feature public presentations of new works that will be in development during the 2025/26 season, giving audiences the chance to experience plays on their way to the Mainstage and beyond. Subscribers will be able to purchase tickets to the first workshop production in this series, *Canton Waterfront*, as an add-on.

**CANTON WATERFRONT(Subscriber add-on)**

**August 16 and 17, 2025**

Playwright: Karen Li

Sailing between the coasts of two generations and two parallel time periods, Karen Li’s *Canton Waterfront* is a new play that follows two members of the Shek family and two of their descendants. The older generation is among the first immigrants to arrive in Baltimore from China while their descendants are visiting for business. And though a few hundred years apart and under different circumstances, the land, blood, and waters that connect them are all the same. Though fighting a different fight than their ancestors who came to America to change their lives, the younger generation comes to these same shores and are reminded of who they have been as they discover who they can be. Developed in Lab410, Baltimore Center Stage’s local playwright’s residency, *Canton Waterfront* tells a tale about the city we call home.

To schedule interviews or for further comment, please connect with us.

**Media Contacts:**

[JRM@JRMConsultancy.com](mailto:JRM@JRMConsultancy.com)

[RMurphy@centerstage.org](mailto:RMurphy@centerstage.org)

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**Join Us**

**5-show subscriptions with the optional add-on for the 2025/26 season are available now** at [www.centerstage.org](http://www.centerstage.org), by calling **410-332-0033**, or by visiting the BCS Box Office Tuesday through Saturday, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**About Baltimore Center Stage**

*Designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage (BCS) 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. We ignite conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages, developing new works by both Baltimore and national writers, engaging the community through initiatives like the Juvenile Justice Theater Program working with incarcerated youth, and serving thousands of students each year on stage and in the classroom. Everything we do at Baltimore Center Stage is grounded in our core values—Joy, Service, and Connection, with Access For All at the heart of our mission. We are deeply committed to eliminating barriers so that everyone can experience and participate in our performances, education efforts, and community work.*