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Presents

THE LOGAN FESTIVAL OF SOLO PERFORMANCE

WANDA'S WAY

Written by Caleen Sinnette Jennings

Performed by Deidra LaWan Starnes*

Directed by Angelisa Gillyard

TOMATOES TRIED TO KILL ME BUT BANJOS SAVED MY LIFE

Written and Performed by Keith Alessi

Directed by Erika Conway

SPANKING MACHINE

Written and Performed by Marga Gomez

PRODUCTION

LIGHTING DESIGN
ELLIOTT SHUGOLL

STAGE MANAGER
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SOUND DESIGN
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PROJECTION DESIGN
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* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States, appearing under a Special Appearance Contract.
+ Member, United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829

WANDA'S WAY



CALEEN SINNETTE JENNINGS - PLAYWRIGHT

Caleen is an actor, director, playwright, and a founding member of The Welders, a D.C. Playwrights' Collective. Dramatic Publishing Company has published eight of her plays, and her work has appeared in seven play anthologies. She was recently commissioned by Arena Stage to write for their inaugural covid-driven 'May 22, 2020' project. She was also commissioned by Roundhouse Theatre to write an episode of their covid-driven

series *Homebound*. In 2017, her adaptation of *Darius & Twig*, for the Kennedy Center did a national tour after playing at the Kennedy Center Family Theatre. From 2015-2020, her Queens Girl Trilogy plays have been commissioned and produced by Theater J, Mosaic Theater, and Everyman Theatre. Caleen has received five nominations for outstanding new play from the Helen Hayes Awards and play writing awards from the Kennedy Center and The Actor's Theatre of Louisville. She is a Professor of Theatre, Emerita in the Department of Performing Arts at American University in Washington, D.C. where she taught for 31 years. In 2019, she received A.U.'s inaugural award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. In 2003, she received the university's Scholar/Teacher of the Year Award. She has been a faculty member of the Folger Shakespeare Library's Teaching Shakespeare Institute since 1994 and she was Project Manager on a 2016 NEH grant to the Folger entitled *Crosstalk: D.C. Reflects on Identity and Difference*. Jennings graduated from Bennington College with a B.A. in Drama, and received her M.F.A. in Acting from NYU Tisch School of the Arts.

NOTES FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

This play is dedicated to

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Special acknowledgement and thanks to:

Jefferson Russell and Officer Jeanine Whittaker

Sincere thanks to Alex Levy and Deidra Starnes without whom this idea would have stayed in my mind.

WANDA'S WAY



ANGELISA GILLYARD - DIRECTOR

Angelisa is a director and choreographer based out of Washington, DC. Most recently she directed *The Mamalogues* at 1st Stage, *Moon Man Walk* at Constellation Theatre Company, and co-directed the Helen Hayes nominated *Day of Absence* with Raymond O. Caldwell at Theater Alliance. Angelisa also directed the world premieres of *Welcome to Sis'* and *#poolparty* for Ally Theatre Company. Her direction and choreography has also been seen at

Arena Stage, Studio Theatre, Signature Theatre, Young Playwrights' Theater, In Series, Freshh Theatre Inc., University of Maryland, Montgomery College and Catholic University. Angelisa has an MBA, PhD and MFA in Directing. For more information visit www.angelisa.net.



DEIDRA LAWAN STARNES - PERFORMER

Associate Artistic Director at 1st Stage, Deidra is a theatre educator, performer, and director throughout the DMV. Her 1st Stage acting credits include *The Mamalogues*, *The Member of the Wedding*, and *The Good Counselor*. Other regional credits include *The Amen Corner*, *Amadeus*, *Milk Like Sugar*, *The Gospel Of Loving-Kindness*, *Julius Caesar*, *Invisible Man* (Helen Hayes Award Most Outstanding

Ensemble), *Intimate Apparel* (Helen Hayes Award), *A Raisin In The Sun*, *I Have Before Me A Remarkable Document....*, *Two Trains Running*, *Spunk*, *Twelve Days Of Christmas*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Passing Strange*, *In The Red And Brown Water*, *Radio Golf*, *King Lear*, *Doubt*, and *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf*, Directed By Ntozake Shange. Film Credits Include *Chasing Refuge*, *Nocturnal Agony*, and *Ladder 49*. Directing Credits Include *A Civil War Christmas* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Helen Hayes Nomination For Most Outstanding Production), *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf* (Theatre Alliance), *Street Life And The Name Game* (DC Theatre Festival), *Soul Collector* (Port City Playhouse), *Once On This Island, Jr.* and *101 Dalmatians* (The Theatre Lab Summer Musical Camp For Tweens). She Holds a BA in Theatre From the University of Maryland, An MFA in Drama from the University of Connecticut, and an MA in Producing Film, TV, and Video from American University. She is currently an Adjunct Professor at Bowie State University.

**Wanda's Way is presented with
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TOMATOES TRIED TO KILL ME BUT BANJOS SAVED MY LIFE



KEITH ALESSI WRITER AND PERFORMER

Before taking to the stage, Keith was well known as a successful public company CEO, entrepreneur and college professor. He has led companies in both Canada and the United States. He has performed in Fringe Festivals and other professional venues across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom since 2018. A dual CA/US citizen, Keith splits his time between Vancouver, British Columbia and Meadows of Dan, Virginia. He is a certified public accountant and received his MBA from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. 100% of the performance fees from the show are donated to cancer and theatre charities. At the end of 2021 contributions exceeded \$500,000 (CAD).



ERIKA CONWAY PRODUCER/ DIRECTOR/ DRAMATURG

Erika Conway, a Canadian actress, writer, director and producer is no stranger to the stage. Her 30-year performance career has included acting in multiple roles both on stage and in film/ TV, as well as creating and producing her own one woman show which had sold out performances at the Edmonton Fringe Festival. The desire to connect with authentic and meaningful stories ultimately lead her to expand

her work on *Tomatoes Tried To Kill Me But Banjos Saved My Life*, and has been the inspiration to continue her passion of creativity in building a coaching business that helps people unlock their passions and discover their authentic voice.

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1st Stage offers a free subscription for all mainstage shows to every high school student in Fairfax County. The **YES** Pass ensures that no student is denied access to live theater due to economic barriers and guarantees that all young people will have an opportunity to be part of the conversation and the artistic life of Fairfax County.

To register a student, contact Deidra Starnes, Associate Artistic Director at deidrastarnes@1stStage.org or call (703) 854-1856.

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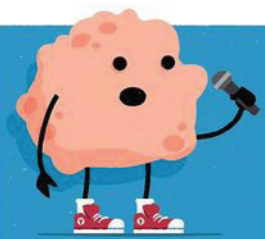
MARGA GOMEZ is the writer/performer of fourteen solo plays which have been presented, nationally, and internationally at 2017 Encuentro De Las Americas, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the Montreal Just For Laughs Festival. Her acting credits include theatre roles: American Conservatory Theater's *Fefu And Her Friends* (2022), Campo Santos production of *Translating Selena* By Richard Montoya, (January 2020), Off-Broadway Ars Nova production of *Dr. Rides American Beach House* (November 2019), Central Work's *King of Cuba* by Cristina Garcia (July 2018); television: *Sense8* (Netflix); and film: *Sphere* (Warner Brothers.) Gomez teaches solo performance online and in San Francisco at The Kearny Street Workshop, A.C.T and Brava. NBC named her one of eleven "Out Latinos you should know." For more information visit margagomez.com.

HOSTS

Joey Friedman
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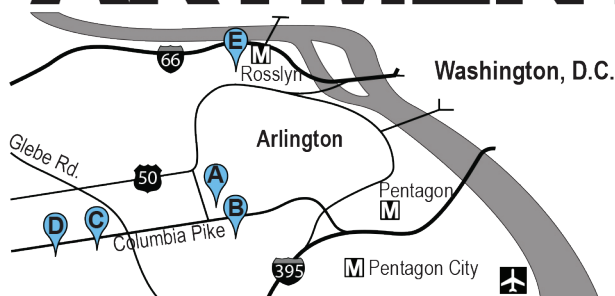
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IN THE GALLERY

Brenda Barthell

My abstracts are the result of both planned and intuitive processes. I may be inspired by an image, object, or scene that has personal meaning, but the original idea will be transformed as I move in and out of abstraction, layering and editing the images that please or challenge me.

I tend to favor landscape elements but my most recent series, titled "Below the Surface," imagines a world beneath the horizon.



Below the Surface III, acrylic

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Brenda Barthell has won numerous awards for her work, including Awards of Distinction at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and the Virginia Museum of History and Culture. She was a finalist in the 2014 abstract/experimental art challenge sponsored by the International Artist Magazine and was featured in *Elan Magazine*. Brenda has exhibited in juried solo and group shows since 1985, as well as in corporate venues, and has served as a judge for all-media exhibits.

www.brendabarthell.com | bcbarthell43@gmail.com

Gallery Curator: Deborah Conn, deborahconn@verizon.net



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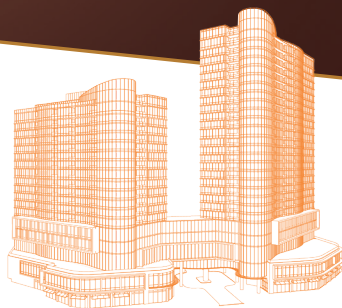
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TECHNICAL CREW

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PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

Chris Banks, designer

Emily Wall, writer

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1st STAGE

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