

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Photo Caption: From left, local actors in "Lettice and Lovage" are Michele S. Mueller of Rocky Hill, Richard Mancini of Stratford, Hermon Telyan of Wilton, Danielle Anna White of Ridgefield, Kara Hankard of Glastonbury, Robert Peterpaul of Darien, and Travis James of Weston.

Local Actors in Comedy "Lettice and Lovage" at Westport Country Playhouse Now Playing through June 17

Extras in Professional Production are from Weston, Wilton, Ridgefield, Darien, and Other Connecticut Towns

Seven Connecticut actors appear as extras in the opening scene of Westport Country Playhouse's production of the Tony Award-nominated comedy, "Lettice and Lovage," written by Peter Shaffer and directed by Mark Lamos, now on stage through June 17. They portray tourists visiting a British historic home guided by Miss Lettice Douffet, who creates outrageous, exaggerated stories to make the stuffy mansion's past more fascinating.

The non-Equity area actors joining the professional cast include Kara Hankard of Glastonbury, who studied acting at Pace University and The Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. She currently interns at the Upright Citizen Brigade, writes sketch comedy, and improvises in New York City. Hankard expressed her impression of appearing on the Playhouse stage, saying, "It has been a joy and an honor to work with Westport Country Playhouse! Everyone is hard working, kind, respectful, and focused on making a fantastic show in a supportive environment."

Travis James of Weston recently starred in the world premiere adaptation of "Murder on the Orient Express" at McCarter Theater, and a touring production of Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors" with Valley Shakespeare Festival. He is a 2014 graduate of Muhlenberg College. He said, "I grew up seeing shows at the Playhouse, so getting the chance to work here has been a dream-come-true for me. What I love the most about this place, aside from the fact that the work is so good, are the opportunities they provide for my generation who want to work in the business, and I see that in all the hard work of the interns. It's really inspiring!"

Stratford resident Richard Mancini's Connecticut acting credits include "The Best Man," "Inherit the Wind," "Bus Stop," "Arsenic and Old Lace," "The Seven Year Itch," "The Front Page," "The Lion in Winter," "Ah! Wilderness," and "Working," among others. He has also directed more than 40 productions for various Connecticut theaters. Mancini, who plays the "Surly Man" in the tourist group,

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said, "I'm thrilled with the opportunity to work with so many talented folks -- from my delightful fellow 'tourists,' to Mark, his great staff and crew, and the wonderful principal cast, whose work I've seen and admired for years; everyone here at WCP has been a joy to work with. And as the 'Surly Man,' I even have a few 'moments' with the lovely Kandis Chappell as Lettice, which has been a terrific experience and tremendous fun."

Michele S. Mueller of Rocky Hill graduated from UConn with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting. Some of her favorite roles are Tina in "The Abdication," Nicola in "The Taming of the Shrew," and Farmer M in "Kai's First Christmas".

Darien resident Robert Peterpaul's recent stage credits include "Spring Awakening" at the Downtown Cabaret Theatre, "Holes the Musical" workshop in New York, "Legally Blonde" in New York, and "Sunday in the Park with George" in New Jersey. He has recently been seen in two nationwide released films: James Franco's "King Cobra" and SONY's "What Happened Last Night." His website is www.robertpeterpaul.com. Peterpaul said of his experience at the Playhouse, "Working with everyone at Westport Country Playhouse has been a dream come true. As an actor, it is beyond incredible to step onto such a beautiful and historic stage and to perform amongst a team that is at the top of their game. Not to mention, working under Mark Lamos' brilliant direction is a master class!"

Hermon Telyan is a Wilton architect who went to MIT and RISD. He is Armenian born in Istanbul, and educated in France. Although he has never acted before, he said, "I am now in awe of the world of theater, especially the backstage and pre-show world. Theater requires talent but also demands a collaborative spirit, dedication, and kindness. Mark Lamos is brilliant; he offers simple yet nuanced instructions, support, and good will. Every detail, every movement, every expression, every stick of furniture is important and carefully considered. Even for my tiny role as an extra, I was impressed how Mark brought out of us the very specific thing he needed to project the full story to the audience."

Danielle Anna White of Ridgefield graduated from Penn State in 2016, majoring in Acting and minoring in Psychology. Not only did she preform in numerous productions at Penn State, she also was the assistant director to some faculty members on their productions. She noted about her stint on the Playhouse stage that "everyone involved with the production is so talented and so kind. I have so much fun doing this show every night!"

The Equity cast includes Kandis Chappell as Lettice, Mia Dillon, Sarah Manton, and Paxton Whitehead.

"Lettice and Lovage" Production Sponsor is Howard J. Aibel. Production Partner is Joyce Hergenhan. Corporate Production Sponsor is Bank of America.

Performance schedule is Tuesday at 7 p.m., Wednesday at 2 and 8 p.m., Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 3 and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Special series feature Taste of Tuesday, LGBT Night OUT, Opening Night, Sunday Symposium, Open Captions, Thursday TalkBack, Together at the Table Family Dinner, Playhouse Happy Hour, and Backstage Pass.

Single tickets start at \$30; buy early for best prices.

Westport Country Playhouse's 2017 Season continues with "Grounded," winner of the 2016 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Solo Production and a Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The contemporary drama, written by George Brant and directed by Liz Diamond, is about an ace fighter pilot, who is grounded by an unexpected pregnancy and reassigned as a drone pilot in Las Vegas where the realities of war and suburban comfort collide. Short-listed for the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award, the play runs July 11 through July 29.

"Appropriate," a 2014-15 Obie Award winner for Best New American Play, is a comic drama about family secrets, written by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. When the Lafayette children gather to catalog their recently deceased father's Arkansas estate, they discover a shameful legacy. Directed by David Kennedy, Playhouse associate artistic director, the play runs August 15 through September 2.

"Sex with Strangers" is a look at a modern relationship in the digital age, written by Laura Eason and directed by Katherine M. Carter. When Ethan, a young sex blogger, turned bestselling author, meets Olivia, a reclusive, thirty-something novelist, dating turns dark as self-reinvention is just a click away. The play will be staged September 26 through October 14.

The 2017 season culminates with one of the greatest love stories ever told, "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare. The tale of two star-crossed teenagers, who fight to love each other in a violent world, will run October 31 through November 19, directed by Mark Lamos, who the *New York Post* said, "is among the finest Shakespearean directors in the world."

All play titles, artists, and dates are subject to change.

For more information and to buy tickets, visit www.westportplayhouse.org or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529, or visit Westport Country Playhouse, 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

About Westport Country Playhouse

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced *theater worth talking about* and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The Playhouse creates this relationship with the community and provides this experience in multiple ways by offering: Live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos, from May through November; educational and community engagement events and opportunities to further explore issues presented by the work on stage; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; *Script in Hand* play readings throughout the year to deepen relationships with audiences and artists alike; the renowned Woodward Internship Program training program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations from December through April to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. The value of the Westport Country Playhouse to all it touches is immeasurable.

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