

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Community Rallies Around Westport Country Playhouse's "Save Your Playhouse" Campaign to Augment Programming for Broader Audience

\$1.8 million raised to date toward \$2 million goal ending Monday, July 31

\$1.8 million has been raised to date in cash and pledges toward Westport Country Playhouse's \$2 million "Save Your Playhouse" campaign goal which ends Monday, July 31, 2023. Over 300 donors have participated in the recently launched fundraising campaign to transform the Playhouse into a center for a wide array of performances that appeal to a broader audience while continuing to produce high-quality theater.

"As proven by this vote of confidence from many donors, our community continues to rally to keep the Playhouse doors open and raise the curtain on a new direction," said Athena T. Adamson, chair, Playhouse board of trustees. "People who believe in our vision are committing dollars. We are confident that we can reach our financial goal.

"We are indeed grateful to our donors for their exceeding generosity and their commitment to bolster the success of our Save Your Playhouse' fundraising campaign," Adamson added.

"While there's a deep respect for the Playhouse history and what it is today, there's also an eagerness for growth, change, and the next chapter," she stated. "We are listening; we care about what the audience wants to see on the Playhouse stage. In turn, the audience is stepping up to offer their support."

Last week, the board of trustees announced that director, playwright, and actor Mark Shanahan has been appointed incoming artistic director for the 2024-25 season. He will officially assume the position in March 2024. Currently, Shanahan is curator of the Playhouse's Script in Hand playreading series. Shanahan will succeed artistic director Mark Lamos, who announced in May his planned retirement in January 2024 after 15 seasons. Lamos' final directing work, a new adaptation of the classic thriller, "Dial M for Murder," is now on stage through Sunday, July 30.

Beginning in 2024, Westport Country Playhouse will be a performing arts center from January through August, presenting a series of single night events, including cabaret, comedy, music, playreadings and speakers. From September 2024 through March 2025, the Playhouse will mount three theatrical productions, under the artistic direction of Shanahan.

"The community is changing and we must adapt our programming," Adamson added. "We won't lose our theatergoers; we simply are looking to increase our audience by offering more entertainment options. Our board of trustees wants the Playhouse to be here for the entire community, with performances on stage to appeal to everyone.

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“Both culturally and economically, the Playhouse has been a valuable asset to Fairfield County for 92 years and it must continue to carry on,” Adamson emphasized. “I’m optimistic. I believe we can save this treasure, but we need the public’s financial support, in any amount, by Monday, July 31 to fully implement our plan.”

For highlights of the campaign and to donate, visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/support/save-your-playhouse/>. Naming opportunities are available, including engraved paving stones in the Playhouse courtyard and seat plates in the theater. For naming inquiries, contact development@westportplayhouse.org.

For Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit westportplayhouse.org or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Instagram (wcplayhouse), and YouTube (WestportPlayhouse). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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