

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand Playreading of Award Winner “The Subject Was Roses” on Monday, March 2

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of “The Subject Was Roses,” winner of the 1965 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and a Tony Award for Best Play, on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. The timeless piece is written by Frank D. Gilroy and directed by Joe Delafield, Playhouse artistic associate.

"I truly do love this play, and have a long history with it," said Delafield, "so bringing 'The Subject Was Roses' to life at the Westport Country Playhouse feels deeply personal and meaningful. A landmark of American drama, it is gratifying to present it once more on a stage long devoted to works of emotional truth and humanity. This is a play that is equally humorous and heart-wrenchingly honest, and reminds us of the humanity that shapes our most meaningful relationships. It's a story with themes that continue to echo across the generations."

It's May 1946, and as the war draws to an end, a young soldier returns home to the Bronx apartment where he was raised. Hoping his homecoming will repair his parents' troubled marriage, Timmy Cleary presses for small acts of reconciliation, only to expose years of resentment and emotional distance. As tensions rise, the family is forced to confront the truth of their relationships and the life they share. With heart, depth, and emotional bravery, “The Subject Was Roses” is a tale of a family struggling to see one another clearly for the first time.

Mark Shanahan, Script in Hand series curator and Playhouse artistic director, stated, "After recently presenting a number of exciting new and contemporary works, I'm thrilled for our popular reading series' revisit to a classic play with a long and meaningful history at the Playhouse. This play took Broadway by storm in 1965 and remains as powerful as it did when it premiered. The play was produced at the Playhouse in 1966 and again in 1982, and it feels long overdue for a return.

"I'm especially excited to welcome audience favorite Joe Delafield to direct alongside a remarkable cast," added Shanahan. "Joe brings a deep understanding of the play's emotional clarity and restraint, making him an ideal guide for this intimate evening. The play's focus on unspoken tensions and one family's emotional distance remain strikingly relevant, portraying a family living with the consequences of years of misunderstanding. I have no doubt 'The Subject Was Roses' will deeply move Playhouse audiences today just as it did in the past."

The three-member cast includes **Etai Benson** as Timmy Cleary (Broadway: Paul in the Tony Award-winning revival of “Company,” Papi in “The Band’s Visit,” Boq in “Wicked”; First National Tour: “An American in Paris”); **Isabel Keating** as Nettie Cleary (Westport Country Playhouse: “Theatre People,” “A Sherlock Carol,” Script in Hand playreadings; Broadway: “Queen of Versailles,” “Wicked,” “The Boy from Oz” - Tony Award nomination, Drama Desk and Theatre World awards; TV: Emmy Award-winning PBS

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American Masters “Judy Garland: By Myself”); **Lenny Wolpe** as John Cleary (Westport Country Playhouse: “She Loves Me,” several Script in Hand playreadings; Broadway: “Bullets Over Broadway,” “Wicked,” “The Drowsy Chaperone”; TV: Nearly 100 guest spots, Emmy nomination for Amazon series “After Forever”); and **Faith Sandberg** reading stage directions (Westport Country Playhouse: several Script in Hand playreadings; Stage: “Fun Home,” “Peter & The Starcatcher,” “Mamma Mia”; HBO: “Boardwalk Empire”).

Director is **Joe Delafield** (Westport Country Playhouse: “A Sherlock Carol,” “The 39 Steps,” “The School for Husbands,” Radio Theater’s “A Merry Little Christmas Carol,” Script in Hand playreadings, Playhouse artistic associate; Broadway: “Tartuffe”; TV: “The Sopranos”).

Playwright is **Frank D. Gilroy** (Award-winning playwright, producer, screenwriter, and director; contributed profusely as a writer to the Golden Age of Television; Off-Broadway: “Who’ll Save the Plowboy?”- 1962 Obie Award; Broadway: “The Subject Was Roses” – 1965 Tony Award for Best Play, Pulitzer Prize for Drama).

Tickets are \$35. Running time is two hours with one intermission; appropriate for age 13 and up.

For full details, visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/script-in-hand-march/>

The 2026 Script in Hand Playreading Series is supported by Joyce Hergenhan and the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation. 2026 Programming and Season Sponsor is Barbara Streicker. Media sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio. Westport Country Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

The Script in Hand 2026 season continues on Mondays at 7 p.m., on May 4, June 8, September 14, October 5, and November 30; titles to be announced. Subscriptions to the Script in Hand series are available as well as single tickets.

Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors use their skills to catapult the audience’s imagination without benefit of scenery or costumes. For a video on Script in Hand, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2eWDaF-JXA>

A complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at westportplayhouse.org. All play titles, artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

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](https://www.instagram.com/wcplayhouse)), and YouTube ([WestportPlayhouse](https://www.youtube.com/WestportPlayhouse)). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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