

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

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NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Hosts “Letters to Our Daughters,” a Free Event Celebrating International Women’s Day on March 8

**Joanna Gleason, Judith Ivey, Susan Kelechi Watson, and More Will Share
Essays and Poems by Female Writers**

Westport Country Playhouse will host the second annual “Letters to Our Daughters,” a free-of-charge event to celebrate International Women’s Day, on Thursday, March 8, at 7 p.m. A diverse group of 13 women, including Tony Award winners Joanna Gleason and Judith Ivey, and “This Is Us” series regular Susan Kelechi Watson, will read essays and poems written by female authors on global women’s issues.

The program is curated by Samantha Goober and Anne Keefe.

“International Women’s Day is a great way of reminding us to celebrate the women in our lives, not just on this day, but every day,” said Goober. “On March 8th we are looking forward to welcoming a group of vibrant women on our stage with a wealth of different backgrounds and experiences to share the words of an equally vibrant group of women writers from around the world.”

Keefe, Playhouse associate artist, noted that last year’s presentation was “completely sold out.” She added, “This year, we’ll bring back some favorite readings from 2017 and add new selections that have resonance given our collective experiences over the past year. Along with serious moments, we’ll have lighter reflections as well.”

Readers of works by female writers will include **Farah Bala**, actor in ABC’s “Quantico, HBO’s “High Maintenance,” Comedy Central’s “Broad City,” and social justice advocate/organizer; **Danielle Davenport**, actor and writer currently appearing in the second season of Amazon’s “Sneaky Pete”; **Joanna Gleason**, Tony Award-winning actor for “Into the Woods” and Tony nominee for “Joe Egg”; **Wilhelmina Hartong**, writer, award-winning standup comedienne, and theater teacher at Regional High School for the Arts in Trumbull, CT; and **Alicia Hernandez Strong**, a senior at Wesleyan University and a political activist from New Britain, CT.

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Also, **Judith Ivey**, Tony Award-winning actor for “Hurlyburly” and “Steaming,” television’s “Designing Women”; **Susan Kelechi Watson**, WCP’s “A Raisin in the Sun,” NAACP Image Award nomination and SAG Award win for NBC’s “This Is Us”; **Elise Kibler**, actor in Broadway’s “The Heidi Chronicles,” “This Is Our Youth”; **Pamela Lewis**, founder of Connect-Us, connecting suburban and urban neighbors in Fairfield County, CT, and beyond; **Aleta Mitchell**, actress in original cast of Broadway’s “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” and WCP’s “Intimate Apparel,” “The Member of the Wedding”; **Patricia Russo**, executive director of Women’s Campaign School at Yale and public speaker; **Najla Said**, actress, playwright, and author of “Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family”; and **Pearl Sun**, actor in Broadway’s “If/Then,” Netflix’s “Orange Is the New Black,” WCP’s “tick, tick...Boom!”

All performers are subject to change.

The event’s title “Letters to Our Daughters” is taken from a collection of essays by Maya Angelou called “Letters to My Daughter.” Keefe said that in the spirit of her words, the title was adopted and changed to reflect this event.

Sponsors of “Letters to Our Daughters” are Bank of America, Northwestern Mutual, and Pitney Bowes. Community Partners are the YWCA of Darien/Norwalk, Anti-Defamation League, Jack and Jill of America, and League of Women Voters. Charity Partner, along with Westport Country Playhouse, is The Center for Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling and Education, serving eight towns/cities in lower Fairfield County. At the event, donations will be accepted for the Charity Partners.

“We really want to take a moment to celebrate women - their strengths, their stories, their extraordinary lives,” added Goober. “We hope our community members will come to the Playhouse on March 8th, so we can enjoy just a handful of the millions of stories women around our world have to tell.”

International Women’s Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. More information on International Women’s Day is available at www.internationalwomensday.com.

Tickets are free-of-charge by reservation by calling the Playhouse’s box office at 203-227-4177, emailing boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org, or in person at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. Online reservations are unavailable for this event. Seating is reserved; limit of two free tickets per household. The program is geared for age 14 and up. Audience members are encouraged to wear purple - a color internationally recognized as symbolizing women, and the official color of International Women’s Day.

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 not-for-profit Playhouse provides this experience in multiple ways by offering: Live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos; educational and community engagement events to further explore the work on stage; programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; Script in Hand play readings to deepen relationships with audiences and artists; the renowned Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; youth performance training and performance opportunities through Broadway Method Academy, WCP’s resident conservatory; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round.

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