

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Blaufuss, Press Representative
Press Office: (203) 227-5137, ext. 197 pblaufuss@westportplayhouse.org

For Immediate Release: January 11, 2017

Westport Country Playhouse Develops New Plays through New Works Initiative

Westport Country Playhouse continues its commitment to developing new plays and musicals with its New Works Initiative set for January and February.

"Our goal is to nurture and nourish new writing and to seek exciting projects for our five-play seasons," said Mark Lamos, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director.

This year, the New Works Initiative will make possible the development of four new plays through workshops involving playwrights and other artists, culminating in readings before an invited audience in the Playhouse's Lucille Lortel White Barn, Sheffer Studio.

The 2017 New Works Initiative schedule includes a reading of "The Vendler Television Playhouse" by Susan Rice, a farcical comedy about a 1950s live television studio and its wacky cast of characters, on Thursday, January 19. The reading will star Tony Award winner Joanna Gleason, and will be directed by Robert Cary, Fairfield native and co-writer of "Grease Live!"

Matthew Greene's "Thousand Pines," the heart-stopping tale of a small town tragedy that weaves some unsuspecting families together, will be workshopped on Wednesday and Thursday, January 25 and 26. The play will be directed by Playhouse vet and star of stage and screen, Austin Pendleton.

"The Biggest Valley" by A. Zell Williams will be workshopped on Friday, January 27. The play is set in Fresno, California, in the late '90s, where a single mother struggles to help her children through teen pregnancy, racial tensions, and a life she never dreamed for them.

"The Forgotten Woman," a gleeful comedy about an operatic superstar and her tumultuous off-stage life, is written by Jonathan Tolins, who penned last season's Playhouse comedy hit, "Buyer & Cellar." Tolins' new play will have a reading on Monday, February 6.

The New Works Initiative is funded by the Playhouse's New Works Circle. Founding members are Howard J. Aibel, Stephen Corman, Ania Czekaj-Farber, Sandra and Neil DeFeo, Kate and Bob

- more -

Westport Country Playhouse
25 powers court westport, connecticut 06880

administrative office t: 203.227.5137 f: 203.221.7482 • box office t: 203.227.4177 f: 203.454.3238
Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse) Twitter (@WCPlayhouse)

www.WestportPlayhouse.org

Devlin, Michele and Marc Flaster, Susan Jacobson and David Moskowitz, Judy and Scott Phares, Barbara and John Samuelson, Barbara and John Streicker, and Johnna G. Torsone and John McKeon.

"We are grateful for the passionate generosity of our New Works Circle members, a group of avid theater supporters who share with me a vested interest in new work and its presence at the Playhouse," said Lamos. "With their help, we are able to continue at an even higher level the Playhouse's long history of taking plays from the page to the stage."

Throughout its 86 years, Westport Country Playhouse has been home to 43 world premiere productions of new plays and musicals, including the recent comedy, "Love and Money," by A. R. Gurney, co-produced with New York's Signature Theatre.

For more information, call 203-227-5137, ext. 134, or visit Westport Country Playhouse, 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. www.westportplayhouse.org. Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), 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 during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; *Family Festivities* presentations from November 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.

###