

# 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: February 6, 2018

### **Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand Playreading of Romantic Comedy “Better Late” by Larry Gelbart, “M\*A\*S\*H” Creator**

**Cast includes Joanna Gleason, Chris Sarandon, Charles Socarides, Lenny Wolpe**

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of “Better Late,” a romantic comedy by Larry Gelbart, on Monday, February 26, at 7 p.m. Gelbart was a creator and producer of the television series “M\*A\*S\*H,” and a co-writer of the film “Tootsie” and the Broadway musicals “City of Angels” and “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum.”

Mel Brooks said that Larry Gelbart “is among the very best comedy writers ever produced in America.”

The cast includes Playhouse alumni Joanna Gleason, Chris Sarandon, Charles Socarides, and Lenny Wolpe. The reading will be directed by Anne Keefe, Playhouse associate artist and curator of the playreading series. Tickets are \$20 each.

In “Better Late,” composer Lee Baer (Sarandon) is forced by his wife Nora (Gleason) to take in her ex-husband Julian (Wolpe) after a recent stroke. Tension builds between the two as Julian makes it more and more difficult for Lee to get any songs written. Family and relationship dynamics are tested when Julian and Nora's son Billy (Socarides) reveals that he is going through a divorce of his own. How long will Julian stay and how long will it take until Lee cracks?

“What’s not to love about almost anything written by the comedic genius Larry Gelbart?” said Keefe. “I was thrilled to happen upon this little gem, and to start laughing from the first page!”

Joanna Gleason is the winner of numerous awards, including the 1988 Tony Award as Best Actress for Stephen Sondheim’s “Into the Woods.” She received a Tony nomination for “Joe Egg.” She won a Theater World Award for “The Real Thing,” and a Drama Desk Award for “Social Security.” She appeared at the Playhouse in “Come Be My Love,” an evening of poetry, and Script in Hand playreadings of “Any Wednesday” and “Fallen Angels.”

Chris Sarandon’s Broadway credits include “The Rothschilds,” “Two Gentlemen from Verona,” and “Nick and Nora.” His films include “Dog Day Afternoon,” for which he received an Oscar nomination, and “The Princess Bride.” He appeared at the Playhouse in “Sedition” by Weston playwright David

- 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](http://www.WestportPlayhouse.org)

Wiltse, "Come Be My Love," and Script in Hand playreadings of "Any Wednesday" and "Fallen Angels."

Charles Socarides appeared in WCP's "The Dining Room," and Script in Hand playreadings of "Lobby Hero" and "The Mousetrap." Off-Broadway, he was in "Indian Blood," "Sons of the Prophet," and "The Marriage of Better and Boo." His television credits include "Madam Secretary," and the ABC mini-series "When We Rise."

Lenny Wolpe was on the Playhouse stage in "She Loves Me," and Script in Hand playreadings of "The Last Night of Ballyhoo," "Beau Jest," and "Over the River and Through the Woods." On Broadway, he was in "Bullets Over Broadway," "Wicked," "The Drowsy Chaperone," "The Sound of Music," "Mayor," "Copperfield," "Into the Light," and "Onward Victoria."

Playwright Larry Gelbart (1928-2009) is a Chicago-born writer and producer who achieved success for his work in radio, television, film, and theater. He began his professional career in the late 1940s, writing for such radio shows as "The Eddie Cantor Show," "The Maxwell House Coffee Time with Danny Thomas," "Duffy's Tavern," "The Jack Paar Show," and "The Bob Hope Show." By the early 1950s he had begun writing for television, including "Sid Caesar's Hour." His television work in the 1960s, '70s, '80s, and '90s includes the long-running and hugely successful "M\*A\*S\*H." In addition to "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," his work for the theater includes the play "Sly Fox," and the musical "City of Angels," which won six 1990 Tony Awards, including Best Book of a Musical and Best Musical. His film work includes "Oh, God" and "Tootsie."

Director Anne Keefe served as artistic director of Westport Country Playhouse with Joanne Woodward in 2008, and as associate artistic director from 2000-2006, also with Ms. Woodward. She co-directed with Ms. Woodward the Westport Country Playhouse production of "David Copperfield," and directed many Script in Hand playreadings.

All artists are subject to change.

The Script in Hand series is supported, in part, by the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation.

For more information and to buy tickets, visit [www.westportplayhouse.org](http://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 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.

###