

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse's Sunday Symposium Guest Discusses Obie Award-winning Play "Appropriate"

Daphne A. Brooks, professor of African American Studies, Theater Studies, American Studies, and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies at Yale University, will be guest speaker at Westport Country Playhouse's Sunday Symposium following the Sunday, August 20, 3 p.m. matinee performance of "Appropriate," an Obie Award-winning play about family secrets by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. The Playhouse Sunday Symposium program is free and open to the public.

Brooks will engage in a conversation about the play with David Kennedy, Playhouse associate artistic director, and director of the production. Kennedy is the winner of Connecticut Critics Circle Awards for Outstanding Director of a Play and Outstanding Production of a Play for last season's "The Invisible Hand."

Brooks is the author of two books: *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910*, winner of The Errol Hill Award for Outstanding Scholarship on African American Performance from ASTR, and *Jeff Buckley's Grace*. She is currently working on a new book entitled *Subterranean Blues: Black Women Sound Modernity*. She has authored numerous articles on race, gender, performance, and popular music culture such as "Sister, Can You Line It Out?: Zora Neale Hurston & the Sound of Angular Black Womanhood" in *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, "'Puzzling the Intervals': Blind Tom and the Poetics of the Sonic Slave Narrative" in *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative*, "Nina Simone's Triple Play" in *Callaloo*, and "'All That You Can't Leave Behind': Surrogation & Black Female Soul Singing in the Age of Catastrophe" in *Meridians*. Brooks is also the author of the liner notes for *The Complete Tammi Terrell* and *Take a Look: Aretha Franklin Complete on Columbia*, each of which has won the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for outstanding music writing. Brooks' music and cultural criticism has appeared in *The Nation*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Slate*, *Oxford American*, *Artforum*, *The Guardian*, and *Pitchfork.com*.

"Appropriate" is about a family who gather at the crumbling Arkansas plantation of their recently deceased father. As they catalog his estate, they discover a shameful legacy. In the tradition of American family dramas, from "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and "Long Day's Journey Into Night" to "August: Osage County," the story unleashes a series of surprises. The play, containing mature themes and language, runs August 15 – September 2.

The Sunday Symposium Series is supported, in part, by the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation.

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Appropriate” Production Sponsor is the Eunice and David Bigelow Foundation.

For more information and to buy tickets, visit 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 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 training program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations from December 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.

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