

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Blaufuss, Public Relations Manager
(203) 227-5137 x197 | (203) 571-1287 | pblaufuss@westportplayhouse.org

For Immediate Release: March 23, 2020

Westport Country Playhouse Announces Changes in 2020 Season Due to Coronavirus Pandemic

90th Season for historic theater now set to begin in July

Westport Country Playhouse announces changes in its upcoming 2020 Season, with the official opening now scheduled for July instead of the previously announced April kick-off, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The revised 2020 lineup includes a total of three productions: two musicals, “Ain’t Misbehavin’” and “Next to Normal,” and a new comedy, “Tiny House,” instead of the originally scheduled five productions. The three shows were part of the initial 2020 season plan, although two have had date shifts.

“Antigone” and “Blues for an Alabama Sky,” originally scheduled in the 2020 season, have been postponed to future seasons.

The modified 3-play season will run from July 14 through October 24, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos. This year marks the historic, professional theater’s 90th season.

“This is a difficult time for nonprofit regional theaters, but adversity engenders creativity,” said Michael Barker, Playhouse managing director. “We’re thrilled to open new programming online, led by our Education and Community Outreach department, which will engage the public regularly until we will reopen our stage. The new online programming will be announced soon.

“Our season, featuring two musicals and a new comedy, will be a great antidote to the isolation that so many of our patrons are currently enduring,” Barker stated. “We’re thankful for the support of our community as we deliver on our mission to create professional theater—in all of the forms it takes.”

Season ticket packages will now offer a choice of 3-play or 2-play options, including savings, priority seating, restaurant discounts, \$10 off extra tickets, and patron flexibility.

Beginning Monday, March 23, current 2020 season ticket holders of 5-play and Pick-4 packages will receive from the Playhouse box office, via email or regular mail, a form with options to proceed with their season packages. 5-play subscribers will maintain their season tickets for the three remaining shows. Pick-4 package subscribers may change to 3-play or 2-play packages. The balance of the original season ticket value may either be donated to the Playhouse as a tax-deductible gesture of support, or applied to a future performance. Please allow up to three weeks for processing. New season tickets will be mailed before the opening production in July.

- 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

westportplayhouse.org

Gretchen Wright, Playhouse director of development, added, "We've received many offers from generous patrons to donate the remaining value of their tickets to the Playhouse, and I hope this trend will continue. Please consider adding your name to the list! Because we are a non-profit, these donations and other contributions will be essential for sustaining operations and preparations to re-open the Playhouse doors this summer. Thanks to all in our community for supporting us as we navigate through this unprecedented time of uncertainty."

Single ticket holders for rescheduled or postponed shows will also be notified of the ticket change process during the week of March 23.

On Tuesday, March 24, at noon, 3-play and 2-play season ticket packages, as well as flex passes and single tickets, will be on sale. Special offers are available for students, seniors, educators, military, and first responders. Tickets may be purchased online at westportplayhouse.org, by leaving a message on the box office voicemail at (203) 227-4177, or by email at boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org. The Playhouse's physical box office is closed, but staff is working from home, returning phone messages and answering emails. Please understand with the high volume of inquiries, it may take up to 72 hours to respond.

Barker noted, "Our dedicated staff is still on board in all departments, working behind the scenes to stay connected with our audience, and preparing for the lights to go up again. We look forward to July when we can experience live theater again, with its elbow-to-elbow shared laughter, tears, catharsis, intellectual stimulation, enlightenment, and just pure joy. Theater has and always will be a communal way to help us work through what life throws at us and it will be again."

The Playhouse's 2020 3-play season will launch with a dance-filled, reimagined, sassy, and sultry "Ain't Misbehavin'," playing July 14 through August 1. The 1978 Tony Award® winner for Best Musical celebrates the legendary jazz great Fats Waller. The show as you've never seen it before will be directed and choreographed by Camille A. Brown, 2019 Tony Nominee for Best Choreography for "Choir Boy." The musical is conceived by Richard Maltby Jr. and Murray Horwitz, and will be co-produced with Barrington Stage Company. Production Sponsors are Czekaj Artistic Productions, Joyce Hergenhan, and Barbara and John Streicker. Corporate Production Sponsor is BNY Mellon Wealth Management.

The season's second production, "Tiny House," is a new comedy fresh from its world premiere by Delaware's Resident Ensemble Players, playing September 1 through 19. Written by Michael Gotch, who was featured in the Playhouse's 2018 award-winning comedy, "A Flea in Her Ear," the play will be directed by Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director. Fireworks fly when family, friends, and quirky neighbors come together for a July 4th barbecue at the off-the-grid, isolated mountain paradise of a young, urban couple. Production Sponsor is Barbara Samuelson. Production Partners are Johnna G. Torsone and John McKeon.

The season will culminate with the musical, "Next to Normal," with music by Tom Kitt, and book and lyrics by Brian Yorkey, playing October 6 through 24. Director and choreographer is Marcos Santana, who helmed the Playhouse's 2019 hit, "In the Heights." "Next to Normal," a 2009 Tony Award-winning musical and winner of the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, gives a groundbreaking look at a family in crisis, while pushing the boundaries of contemporary musical theater. Production Sponsors are Czekaj Artistic Productions, and Judy and Scott Phares. Corporate Production Partner is Bank of America.

An additional Production Sponsor this season is the Eunice and David Bigelow Foundation.

All play titles, artists, and dates are subject to change.

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. 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 of the highest caliber 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; the New Works Initiative, a program dedicated to the discovery, development, and production of new live theatrical works; special performances and 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 through Broadway Method Academy, Westport Country Playhouse's resident conservatory program; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. Charity Navigator has recently awarded its top 4-star charity rating to the Playhouse in recognition of its strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

###