

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse's Family Festivities Musical "The Wizard of Oz" on Sunday, March 17

"Angelina Ballerina The Musical" follows on April 7 in Family Festivities Series

Westport Country Playhouse's Family Festivities Series will present the classic musical, "The Wizard of Oz," on Sunday, March 17. The show is produced by Vital Theatre Company.

Performances are at 1 and 4 p.m., approximately one-hour in length, and appropriate for ages 2 to 7. Tickets are \$20 each.

Audiences will rediscover the joy of following the yellow brick road with Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tinman, and the Cowardly Lion as they travel through a reimagined world of Oz, featuring the Munchkins, a flying monkey, and a witch.

The show includes music and lyrics by Harold Arlen and E. Y. Harburg, and is directed and choreographed by Clint Hromsco.

Since its founding in 1999, Vital Theatre Company, the show's producer, has been honored with the Off-Broadway Alliance Award for Best Family Musical and two Awards for Excellence by *Off-Off Broadway Review*. Now entering its 20th anniversary season, the company has presented over 75 original productions for over 300,000 children and their families.

To enhance children's experience of "The Wizard of Oz," The Westport Library will host a free-of-charge, hour-long program called "Story Explorers," on Saturday, March 9, at 2:30 p.m., one week prior to the performance. "Story Explorers" will feature an interactive book reading of "The Wizard of Oz," and activities surrounding the show's themes, led by staff from Westport Country Playhouse and Broadway Method Academy, the resident conservatory of Westport Country Playhouse. The program promotes childhood literacy while also enhancing children's experiences of attending the Playhouse's Family Festivities shows. Presenting partners for "Story Explorers" are Westport Country Playhouse, The Westport Library, and Westport Young Woman's League.

An upcoming Family Festivities show will be "Angelina Ballerina The Musical," on Sunday, April 7. Angelina is excited to show off her dance skills to a famous visitor from Camembert Academy, but will Angelina get the starring moment she hopes for? Based on the animated series "Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps," the show is produced by Vital Theatre Company and appropriate for ages 2 to 7.

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In conjunction with the Family Festivities Series, the Playhouse will once again host a book collection for Read to Grow, Inc., a statewide nonprofit organization that provides free children's books to families with limited access and to community resources that serve them. At each Family Festivities performance, bins will be located in the Playhouse lobby for donations of gently used and new children's books which will be given to families and programs in the greater Fairfield County area through Read to Grow. During last season's Family Festivities series, the Playhouse collected nearly 300 books.

Family Festivities Corporate Sponsor is Pitney Bowes. The Family Festivities Series is also supported by the Westport Young Woman's League.

All artists, titles, and dates subject to change.

Everyone in the audience requires a ticket. 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 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 Circle 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.

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