

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: August 29, 2019

Tony Award Winner Kelli O'Hara and Sirius/XM® Radio Personality Seth Rudetsky Headline Westport Country Playhouse Gala

Tony Award-winning Broadway star Kelli O'Hara, accompanied on piano by Sirius/XM® radio personality Seth Rudetsky, will headline Westport Country Playhouse's 2019 Gala, "Black & White Ball: A De-Lovely Evening," on Saturday evening, September 14. The gala performance will be a one-of-a-kind event as the pair shares stories and songs from O'Hara's life and career.

O'Hara's Broadway musical productions include "Jekyll & Hyde," "Follies," "Sweet Smell of Success," "Dracula," "The Light in the Piazza," "The Pajama Game," "South Pacific," "Nice Work If You Can Get It," "The Bridges of Madison County," "The King and I," for which she won the Tony Award® for Best Leading Actress in a Musical, and "Kiss Me, Kate."

Rudetsky is currently the afternoon host on Sirius/XM® Satellite Radio's "On Broadway" as well as the host of "Seth Speaks" on Sirius/XM® Stars. He co-wrote and starred in the musical "Disaster!" which ran Off-Broadway for three years before transferring to Broadway.

Ania Czekaj-Farber of Westport will receive the Playhouse's Leadership Award at the event. She has been an active member of the Playhouse community for many years as secretary of the Playhouse's board of trustees and Gala co-chair from 2015 through 2017.

The gala will feature a live auction led by professional auctioneer CK Swett, who was hailed by the *The New York Times* as having "managed to shake up the staid world of auctioneering." Swett's career in the auction world includes Christie's, Phillips, Heritage, and Lot 1, which he co-founded in 2016. Swett's charity auctioneering efforts have yielded nearly \$100 million across more than 600 events. Gala auction items, listed at <https://WCP2019.givesmart.com>, include a conversation with Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., on September 24, as well as Broadway theater tickets; trips to London, Italy, Bahamas, and other destinations; sports events; jewelry; and many other unique items and experiences.

The gala evening includes a cocktail party at 5:15 p.m., dinner at 6:15 p.m., gala performance at 7:30 p.m., live and silent auctions, and an after-party from 9:30 to 11 p.m. with dancing and live music by Cutting Edge Dueling Pianos.

The 2019 Gala Committee co-chairs are Athena T. Adamson and Paige Couture. The Committee includes Barbara K. Streicker, board chair; Mary Ellen Marpe, development chair; Kate Bahnemann, Deb Bono, Jessica Caldwell, Ania Czekaj-Farber, Lorah Haskins, Maggie Lehnerd-Reilly, Maria

- 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

Mendoza-Smith, Terry Nardozi, Brinton Parson, Judy M. Phares, Dana Rutson Robinson, and Tricia Schwartz.

The Honorary Gala Committee includes Maureen Anderman, Frank Converse, Mia Dillion, Keir Dullea, Jill Eikenberry, Daniel Gerroll, Joanna Gleason, Jonathan Groff, James Earl Jones, Patricia Kalember, James Naughton, Kelli' O'Hara, Christopher and Elaine Plummer, Chris Sarandon, and Michael Tucker.

Moffly Media is the 2019 Gala Magazine Sponsor.

Supporter tickets, at \$350 per person, include a ticket to the performance, silent/live auction, and a post-performance after-party; Patron tickets, at \$1,250 per person, include red carpet welcome, pre-performance dinner, priority seating at performance, silent/live auction, and a post-performance after-party; Benefactor level tickets, at \$2,500 per person, include red carpet welcome, pre-performance dinner, highest priority seating at performance, silent/live auction, and a post-performance after-party, with enhanced VIP privileges, including photos with the gala stars. Corporate sponsorship opportunities are also available. Attire is festive; black tie optional. Valet parking will be provided.

Westport Country Playhouse is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation and contributions are tax-deductible, less the value of goods and services received, as provided by law. All donations receive recognition in the evening's program and inclusion as a 2019 Gala donor in 2020 Season programs at applicable giving levels.

Gala proceeds will benefit the non-profit, professional producing theater, now in its 89th season - its work on stage, with schools, and throughout the community.

Event schedule and artists subject to change.

For more Gala information or ticket purchases, contact the Playhouse box office at 203-227-4177 or visit www.westportplayhouse.org/Gala2019.

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 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.

###