

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

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Westport Country Playhouse Opens Season with Tony Award-winning Musical “In the Heights”

**Director/choreographer and three cast members performed in the
original Broadway production**

Westport Country Playhouse will open its 2019 Season with the Tony Award-winning musical, “In the Heights,” with music and lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda and book by Quiara Alegria Hudes, from April 23 through May 11. Director and choreographer, Marcos Santana, who performed in the Broadway production of “In the Heights, also choreographed last season’s Playhouse production of “Man of La Mancha.” The cast includes three actors from the original Broadway company: Blanca Camacho, Tony Chiroides, and Doreen Montalvo.

Before his smash hit “Hamilton,” Lin-Manuel Miranda wowed audiences with “In the Heights,” a love letter to New York City’s famed Washington Heights, a vibrant community on the brink of change. Three generations dream of new opportunities and struggle with the pressures of expectation and tradition. With an infectious score featuring a blend of hip-hop, salsa, merengue, and soul, “In the Heights” invites audiences to celebrate life and love in this uniquely American story. The contemporary musical is recommended for ages 14 and up.

“With one of the most exciting casts in recent Playhouse memory, we are thrilled to bring back Marcos Santana, the amazingly gifted choreographer who collaborated with me on last season’s ‘Man of La Mancha,’” said Mark Lamos, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director. “For ‘In the Heights,’ he now wears *two* hats, ‘Director’ and ‘Choreographer,’ to create and capture seamlessly the joyous comedy and dramatic twists and turns of this truthful and powerful story.”

The cast of “In the Heights” includes **Rodolfo Soto** as Usnavi (TheaterWorksUSA’s Spring 2018 tour of “The Lightning Thief,” Broadway Bound Theatre Festival’s “Poor Boys’ Chorus”), **Didi Romero** as Nina (musical theater debut; recently graduated from the American Musical and Dramatic Academy), **Tony Chiroides** as Kevin (Original Broadway casts of “In the Heights” and “The Capeman”; Royal Hulamouse in “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood”), **Doreen Montalvo** as Camila (Original Broadway casts of “In the Heights” – 2007 Drama Desk Award, and “On Your Feet!”), **Gerald Caesar** as Benny (Original Broadway casts of “A Bronx Tale,” “Choir Boy”; National Tour of “The Lion King”), **Nina Victoria Negron**, originally from Norwalk, Connecticut, as Vanessa (“In the Heights” as Vanessa and Nina; “Rent” as Mimi), **Ezequiel Pujols** as Sonny (early reading of Broadway’s “On Your Feet!”; Netflix’s “Central Park Five”), **Blanca Camacho** as Abuela Claudia (Original Broadway cast of “In the Heights”; film “The Greatest Showman”; web series “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”), **Sandra Marante** as Daniela (New York’s “Beauty and the Beast,” “Elixir of Love”; television’s “Bull”), **Amanda Robles**, originally

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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

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from Orange, Connecticut, as Carla (regional theater's world premiere "American Mariachi"; multiple shows at Disney World), **Edward Cuellar** as Graffiti Pete ("Radio City Music Hall's Christmas Spectacular," "Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella"), and **Paul Aguirre** of Bridgeport, Connecticut, as Piragua Guy (National Tours of "Billy Elliot," "Seussical," "How the Grinch Stole Christmas").

Ensemble members are **Alison Solomon** (First National Tour of "In the Heights"), **Sarita Colon** (First National Tour of "On Your Feet!"), **Randy Castillo** (National Tour of "An American in Paris"), **Marco Antonio Santiago** (London's "West Side Story"), **Jonté Jaurel Culpepper** ("American Idol" finalist, Season 15), and **Melissa Denise Lopez** (National Tour of "Spamalot").

Composer Lin-Manuel Miranda is an award-winning composer, lyricist, and performer, as well as a 2015 MacArthur Foundation Award recipient. Broadway credits include composer/lyricist/Alexander Hamilton of "Hamilton" (11 Tony Awards, Pulitzer Prize, Grammy Award, Drama League Awards for Distinguished Performance and Outstanding Production of a Musical); and composer/lyricist/Usnavi of "In the Heights" (four Tony Awards including Best Musical and Best Score, Grammy Award, Pulitzer Prize finalist). www.linmanuel.com.

Author Quiara Alegria Hudes is a playwright and professor of writing and theater at Wesleyan University. Among her plays are "Water by the Spoonful," winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama; "In the Heights," winner of the Tony Award for Best Musical and Pulitzer Prize finalist; and "Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue," another Pulitzer Prize finalist. Hudes is a playwright in residence at New York's Signature Theater and a proud alum of Philadelphia Young Playwrights.

Director and choreographer Marcos Santana choreographed Westport Country Playhouse's "Man of La Mancha" last season. Born and raised in Puerto Rico, his Broadway credits as associate choreographer include "On Your Feet!" (Tony Award nomination), and "Rocky" (Tony Award nomination).

The creative team includes Adam Koch, set design; Fabian Aguilar, costume design; María-Cristina Fusté, lighting design; Domonic Sack, sound design; Daniel Green, music director; Alison Solomon, associate choreographer; Alison Mantilla, props master; Jason Brouillard, production stage manager; and Megan Smith, assistant stage manager.

Special funding is provided by Adam Clemens and Galia Gichon, Czekaj Artistic Productions, Joyce Hergenhan, Judy and Scott Phares, and Barbara and John Samuelson. Corporate Production Sponsor is Bank of America.

Performance schedule is Tuesday at 7 p.m., Wednesday at 2 and 8 p.m., Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 3 and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Special series feature Taste of Tuesday (April 23), LGBT Night OUT (April 25), Opening Night (April 27), Sunday Symposium (April 28), Together at the Table Family Dinner (April 30), Open Captions (May 5), Backstage Pass (May 8), Playhouse Happy Hour (May 9), and Thursday TalkBack (May 9). Additional post-show discussions are planned for April 25 and May 2.

Single tickets start at \$30; buy early for best prices. Special offers are available for seniors, students, educators, and playwrights. For details, visit westportplayhouse.org/special-offers.

Upcoming at Westport Country Playhouse is "Skeleton Crew," June 4 through June 22, written by Dominique Morisseau, and directed by LA Williams; "Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin," July 16 through August 3, with lyrics and music by Irving Berlin, book by Hershey Felder, and directed by Trevor Hay; "Mlima's Tale," October 1 through October 19, written by Lynn Nottage and directed by Mark Lamos; and Molière's "Don Juan," November 5 through November 23, a world premiere translation and adaptation by Brendan Pelsue, directed by David Kennedy.

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, 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 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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