

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Westport Country Playhouse Reschedules Script in Hand Playreading Series Due to Pandemic

Westport Country Playhouse announces scheduling changes in its 2020 Script in Hand Playreading Series, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. The series of four remaining playreadings is now scheduled to resume in late June and run through mid-December.

For current Script in Hand ticket holders, the Playhouse box office will reissue and mail new tickets prior to the adjusted performance date(s). Others may purchase tickets, at \$20 each, 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 during the pandemic, 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.

Co-curators and co-directors of the Playhouse's Script in Hand Series are Anne Keefe, Playhouse associate artist, and Mark Shanahan, director, actor, and playwright.

Keefe said, "Mark and I want to thank you all for your patience as we do our best to navigate these strange waters. Having a healthy audience is our primary aim. The best part of isolation has been the chance to actually look at scripts and get a jump on the entire year of choices. We're pretty excited about the upcoming readings and cannot wait to have you all back at the theater!"

Shanahan added, "During our most recent Script in Hand event, Annie and I stood in back of the theater, thrilled to hear you, the audience, filling the Playhouse with laughter. On nights like that, there's nowhere I'd rather be. We look forward to meeting with you all again as soon as we are able. And please know we have some truly great nights planned for you to look forward to as we wait out this difficult time. Consider that a promise! In the meantime, we wish you and yours health, comfort, and safety."

Rescheduled for Monday, June 22, at 7 p.m., from its original March date, is "Mrs. Mannerly" by Jeffrey Hatcher, a comedy about a young boy and his manners teacher. A heartwarming, nostalgic, and hilarious tale about an unlikely friendship, Hatcher's autobiographical play recounts his adventures as a 10-year-old student attending a manners class in Steubenville, Ohio, in the fall of 1967. Under the tutelage of his demanding teacher, Mrs. Mannerly, Jeffrey learns important life lessons beyond which fork to use at dinner, reminding us all that good manners never go out of style.

"Rounding Third" by Richard Dresser, the funny, touching, and tumultuous journey of two Little League coaches, will play on Monday, July 27, at 7 p.m. From their first tentative meeting to the climactic championship game, coaches Michael and Don, despite their differences, form an uneasy

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alliance for the benefit of the team. Don is the tough, blue-collar, win-at-all-costs veteran coach whose son is the star pitcher. Michael, a newcomer both to the town and to baseball, is a corporate executive who agrees to be Don's assistant because he wants a special activity with his son, who's never played baseball before. Over the course of exhilarating victories, heartbreaking defeats, and interminable rain-outs, the two men battle over how to lead the team. Out of their conflicting philosophies, the real issues of the play emerge: how should we raise our children.

"The Bat," a comedy/thriller by Mary Roberts Rinehart, known by fans as "The American Agatha Christie," and Avery Hopwood, is set for Monday, November 16, at 7 p.m., postponed from an April date. On a dark and stormy night, a masked criminal, known only as "The Bat," is on the loose, preying upon the wealthy members of Long Island's East End. But the master thief may have met his match in society matron Cordelia Van Gorder. Gathered in her rented summer home on the very night The Bat will strike again, Cordelia and her guests are in for an evening of murder, mayhem, and madness in a race to unmask The Bat and solve "whodunnit!"

"A Sherlock Carol" by Mark Shanahan will be performed for the holiday season on Monday, December 14, at 7 p.m. When a grown up Tiny Tim asks Sherlock Holmes to investigate the death of Ebenezer Scrooge, the Great Detective must use his gifts to solve a Dickens of a Christmas mystery! Six actors take on the beloved characters of Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Dickens in this heartwarming and highly theatrical holiday treat for all ages.

The Script in Hand Playreading Series is sponsored by Marc and Michele Flaster with support from the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation.

All dates, titles, and artists subject to change.

Tickets may be purchased online at [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org), by leaving a message on the box office voicemail at (203) 227-4177, or by email at [boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org](mailto:boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org). The Playhouse's physical box office is closed during the pandemic, 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. 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.

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