

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 Presents Sunday Symposium for Irving Berlin Musical Tribute

James Kaplan, noted biographer and author of the upcoming book, "Irving Berlin: New York Genius," will be guest speaker at Westport Country Playhouse's Sunday Symposium on July 21, following a 3 p.m. performance of "Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin," a musical tribute to the legendary songwriter.

The Playhouse Sunday Symposium program is free and open to the public. Kaplan will engage in conversation with David Kennedy, Playhouse associate artistic director, about the life, music, and influence of Irving Berlin.

James Kaplan has been writing noted biography, journalism, and fiction for more than four decades. "Irving Berlin: New York Genius" is scheduled for release in November 2019. Exploring the intertwining of Berlin's life with the life of New York City, the biography offers a visceral narrative of Berlin as self-made man and Jewish immigrant, and uncovers Berlin's unique brilliance as a composer of music and lyrics. Kaplan's book underscores Berlin's continued relevance in American popular culture.

Kaplan is also the author of "Frank: The Voice" and "Sinatra: The Chairman," the definitive two-volume biography of Frank Sinatra. Kaplan has written more than 100 major profiles of figures ranging from Madonna to Helen Gurley Brown, Calvin Klein to John Updike, Miles Davis to Meryl Streep, and Arthur Miller to Larry David, for many national magazines. He also co-wrote with Jerry Lewis "Dean and Me: A Love Story."

For Sunday Symposium attendees, 25% off discount flyers will be available to pre-order Kaplan's book, "Irving Berlin: New York Genius," through yalebooks.com.

"Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin" runs from July 16 – August 3. The show celebrates one of the most successful songwriters of the 20th Century and reveals the inspiration for Berlin's countless hit songs, including "Blue Skies," "There's No Business Like Show Business," "White Christmas," and more. Irving Berlin's uplifting immigrant story, from Czarist Russia to New York's Lower East Side to Broadway, epitomizes the American Dream. The production's music and lyrics are by Irving Berlin, book by Hershey Felder, and direction by Trevor Hay.

The Sunday Symposium Series is supported, in part, by the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation.

"Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin" Production Sponsors are Barbara and John Streicker. Production Partners are Johnna G. Torsone and John McKeon. Corporate Production Partner is Cohen and Wolf, P.C. 2019 Media Sponsors are Moffley Media and WSHU Public Radio.

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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

westportplayhouse.org

Single tickets start at \$30 and are subject to change based upon availability. Buy early for best prices. Special offers are available for seniors, students, educators, and playwrights. For details, visit westportplayhouse.org/special-offers.

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. 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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