

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Elizabeth Fort, Director of Marketing and Audience Development  
917-656-4268 | efort@westportplayhouse.org

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### **“Playhouse at the Drive-in”: Westport Country Playhouse Presents Benefit Event Featuring Filmed Performances and a Short-form Documentary on Saturday, October 17**

#### **Celebrate the Playhouse’s 90-season history in-person or online**

Westport Country Playhouse will present “Playhouse at the Drive-in,” a one-night-only benefit event and screening of special filmed performances and a short-form documentary celebrating the theater’s 90-season history, on Saturday, October 17, at the Remarkable Theater Drive-in, 47 Imperial Ave., Westport. The event is also available for online screening at home. Gates open at 5 p.m. for a cocktail hour and picnic dinner. The screening from attendees’ own cars and online begins at 6:30 p.m. Due to the pandemic, “Playhouse at the Drive-in” is in lieu of the theater’s annual Fall Gala fundraiser.

“In these extraordinary times, our usually extraordinary annual gala is going to be *more* extraordinary than ever!,” said Mark Lamos, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director. “In fact, it’s turning into an extraordinary *virtual* (at least partially) and brand new kind of fundraising event that we think is going to be extraordinarily *enjoyable*.”

The benefit evening will be highlighted by a short-form documentary saluting the Playhouse, its history, and many of the artists who have lit up the stage. It is created exclusively for this event by Playhouse artistic director Mark Lamos and filmmaker Douglas Tirola, who is also the director. Tirola was raised in Westport and is a current resident. One of his first jobs as a teenager was as a Westport Country Playhouse beautifier. Tirola’s films have premiered at festivals around the world including Sundance, Berlin, Tribeca, and SXSW. His movies have also been released on HBO, Netflix, PBS, and Showtime. He is president of New York-based 4<sup>th</sup> Row Films.

The evening will include filmed performances by Playhouse alumni and friends Kate Baldwin; Britney Coleman; Tina Fabrique; The Naughton Family, featuring James Naughton, Greg Naughton, Kelli O’Hara, and Keira Naughton; Brenda Pressley; Amanda Robles; and a special performance by André De Shields. Filmed appearances will be made by Jane Alexander, Lissy Newman, Christopher Plummer, Stephen Sondheim, Richard Thomas, and many more who have been associated with the historic theater.

Lamos noted, “Though you can’t be in the Playhouse proper right now, you *can* relive favorite memories and hear behind-the-scenes tales from stars and stagehands, staff, donors, trustees, and longtime audience members - people who have made a *difference* to the life and the ongoing health of the Playhouse over its extraordinary history.

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#### **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](http://westportplayhouse.org)

“Our survival now depends more than ever on your belief in the Playhouse and your generosity,” said Lamos. “Please join me (I won't be virtual, I'll be there) at the Remarkable Theater for a really fun evening. It's a completely unique event, and you won't want to miss it.”

On-site benefit tickets are limited, starting at \$500 per car (maximum car occupancy five people). Online film screening from home is \$25 for a non-shareable link.

The benefit event's Executive Producers are Judy and Scott Phares, and Barbara and John Streicker. Producers are Athena and Daniel Adamson, Paige and Jodi Couture, Ellen Petrino, Kerry and Maggie Lehnerd-Reilly, and Marietta White. Event Corporate Producer is BNY Mellon Wealth Management, and Corporate Sponsor is RDM Financial Group. Event Leadership includes Paige Couture, Maggie Lehnerd-Reilly, Judy Phares, Barbara Streicker, Joanna Romberg, and 3wishesevents.

In-Kind Support and Community Partners include Teresa Nardozi and Dr. Pietro Marghella, Judy and Scott Phares, Balducci's, Castle Wine & Spirits, The Fresh Market, and Remarkable Theater.

Special thanks to Playhouse donors Maureen and Edwin Schloss, Roz and Bud Siegel, The Streicker Family, Stacy and Howard Bass, and Yvette and David Waldman (in memory of Jessica Waldman).

For the safety of guests and staff, complimentary treats and beverages at the event will be pre-packaged, sealed, and handled by Playhouse staff wearing gloves and masks. Parking spots will be marked with at least six feet of distance between each vehicle.

Westport Country Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization; contributions are tax-deductible as provided by law.

For more information, to purchase tickets, or to become a sponsor, please contact Gretchen Wright, Playhouse director of development, at (858) 945-0493 or [gwright@westportplayhouse.org](mailto:gwright@westportplayhouse.org). Stay connected to the Playhouse at [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org), Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), and 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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