

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Presents Conversation about Thornton Wilder's American Classic, "Our Town"

In conjunction with book release of "Another Day's Begun: Thornton Wilder's 'Our Town' in the 21st Century" by Howard Sherman

Westport Country Playhouse, in conjunction with the recent book release of "Another Day's Begun: Thornton Wilder's 'Our Town' in the 21st Century" by Howard Sherman, will present a virtual conversation about the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, beginning on Sunday, February 14, at 3 p.m., on the Playhouse's website (westportplayhouse.org) and Youtube channel ([WestportPlayhouse](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8)), free-of-charge. Running time is approximately 35 minutes.

Participating in the "Our Town at the Playhouse" panel will be Howard Sherman, author; Anne Keefe, current Playhouse associate artist, and former associate artistic director with Joanne Woodward at the time of the Playhouse's 2002 production of "Our Town"; and Jake Robards, who appeared in the Playhouse production. Host is Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director.

"When I first proposed my book 'Another Day's Begun' to the publisher, I knew that the Westport Country Playhouse production would have to be part of it," said Sherman. "This was not only because it was the most recent production of 'Our Town' to reach Broadway, with a distinguished cast, but also because my first post-college job, only two weeks after graduation, was at Westport. It's a theatre that remains close to my heart. This conversation was a particular pleasure because it was a chance to discuss the book and the production with Mark Lamos, my boss at Hartford Stage after I left the Playhouse, my friend of over 35 years, and the person who truly opened my eyes to what theatre can be."

Sherman's book "Another Day's Begun: Thornton Wilder's 'Our Town' in the 21st Century" was published in January 2021 by Methuen Drama and may be purchased directly from Bloomsbury/Methuen and Bookshop.org.

Westport Country Playhouse produced "Our Town" in the summer of 2002, under the artistic direction of Joanne Woodward. Directed by James Naughton, the cast included Paul Newman as the Stage Manager, Jayne Atkinson as Mrs. Gibbs, Frank Converse as Dr. Gibbs, Jane Curtin as Mrs. Webb, Jeffrey DeMunn as Mr. Webb, Jake Robards as Howie Newsome, Kristen Hahn as Rebecca Gibbs, Maggie Lacey as Emily Webb, Ben Fox as George Gibbs, Stephen Spinella as Simon Stimson, John Braden as Professor Willard, and Mia Dillon as Mrs. Soames. Set and costume design was by Tony

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Walton, lighting design by Richard Pilbrow, and sound design by Ray Schilke. Production manager was Ruth Moe; stage manager, Katherine Lee Boyer; and casting director, Deborah Brown.

The Playhouse production transferred to Broadway's Booth Theatre for a limited run, and was filmed for Showtime Networks and PBS's "Masterpiece Theatre." The production is currently available at DVD Netflix.

"Our Town" was first produced at the Playhouse in 1947 with its author Thornton Wilder as the Stage Manager. The story of everyday lives in the fictional American small town of Grover's Corners in the early 1900s opened on Broadway in 1938.

Due to the global pandemic, the Playhouse campus remains closed since last March. The 2021 Season is scheduled to begin in April, online and in-person. Playhouse management will be following the science and the State of Connecticut Department of Health guidelines in deciding when and how to safely open its buildings to the public.

For Westport Country Playhouse information, visit westportplayhouse.org, leave a message on the box office voicemail at (203) 227-4177, or 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. 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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