

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Announces All-Virtual 2021 Season

A diverse offering of on-line entertainment experiences will celebrate the Playhouse's 90th anniversary year

Westport Country Playhouse announces an all-virtual 2021 Season, featuring two productions---a new comedy and a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning drama; two archival productions recorded in HD video; and four Script in Hand playreadings. Founded in 1931, the Playhouse will celebrate its 90th year from April through December, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos. All content will be offered on-demand for patrons' convenience, and include open captions in Spanish. Productions will be rehearsed and filmed under Covid-19 safety protocols.

"We are learning new ways to create theater," said Lamos. "Because our season will be all-virtual, we'll be able to invite new audiences to our theater. And for our loyal patrons, we'll give them more opportunities to engage with the Playhouse than ever before - new productions, gems from the archives, and online events to interact with each other and our staff.

"We will approach each virtual production in this way: What aspect of the play can we explore in this medium to tell the story we want to tell?"

The all-virtual 2021 Season will open in June with a new comedy, "Tiny House." Fireworks fly when family, friends, and quirky neighbors come together for a July 4th barbecue at the off-the-grid, isolated mountain paradise of a young, urban couple. Fresh from its world premiere by Delaware's Resident Ensemble Players, the play is written by Michael Gotch and directed by Mark Lamos.

"Doubt: A Parable," the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winner by John Patrick Shanley, will be staged in the fall, directed by David Kennedy, Playhouse associate artistic director. The intimate drama is about Sister Aloysius, a Bronx school principal, who takes matters into her own hands when she suspects the young Father Flynn of improper relations with one his students.

Beginning in April, a series of four Script in Hand playreadings will feature "Rent Control," the Off-Broadway hit comedy and true story of a struggling-to-survive actor in New York City who invents a money-making scheme that backfires, written and performed by Evan Zes, and directed by Mark Shanahan, Script in Hand curator. The Script in Hand series will continue in June, October, and December, titles to be announced.

In the fall, the Playhouse will present two gems from its archive of productions recorded in HD video: the critically acclaimed musical from 2018, "Man of La Mancha," directed by Mark Lamos, and another fan favorite, pending the arrangement of streaming rights.

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For those who participate in the Playhouse's pre- and post-performance events, including Sunday Symposium, Post-Play Dialogues, Backstage Pass, and LGBT Night Out, plans are in the works to take them online.

Previously announced productions for 2021, "Next to Normal" and "Ain't Misbehavin,'" have been postponed to 2022. They will be directed and choreographed by Marcos Santana and Camille A. Brown, respectively. LA Williams, who was scheduled to direct "Blues for an Alabama Sky" in 2021, will return in 2022, helming a play to be announced.

Free-of-charge events available to the public during the Playhouse's 2021 Season will include "Cocktails with Mark," hosted by Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director, with guest artists and Playhouse friends; "From Concept to Curtain," featuring behind-the-scenes interviews about past Playhouse productions, including "Mlima's Tale" by Lynn Nottage, from 2019, and "Flyin' West" by Pearl Cleage, from 2018; and "Radio Suspense Theater" in partnership with WSHU Public Radio. Dates will be announced. The free-of-charge events will be available on the Playhouse's website (westportplayhouse.org), Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), and YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

2021 Season Sponsor is the Eunice and David Bigelow Foundation. Additional support for 2021 artistic programs comes from the Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation, Inc., the Burry Fredrik Foundation, the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation, and the Shubert Foundation, Inc.

Season ticket packages will go on sale April 1 for two online productions and streaming of two archival productions recorded in HD video. Single tickets for two online productions and streaming of two archival productions recorded in HD video will go on sale May 1. Tickets for the Script in Hand playreading in late April will go on sale shortly; future playreadings in June, October, and December will go on sale May 1.

Due to the global pandemic, the Playhouse campus remains closed since March 2020. The Playhouse management will be following the science, and guidelines from theater artists' unions and the State of Connecticut Department of Health in deciding when and how to safely open its buildings to the public.

All dates, titles, and artists subject to change. Structure of all productions are subject to change based upon Covid-19 safety guidelines at the time of performance.

To purchase tickets to the Playhouse's virtual season, 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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