

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Presents “Cabaret in the Robards”

Broadway’s Brad Simmons, Tonya Pinkins, Larry Owens, and Ali Stroker will perform in person to benefit the theater’s reopening, beginning in June

Westport Country Playhouse will present “Cabaret in the Robards,” a series of live, in-person, on-stage performances headlined by Broadway musical talents, beginning in June. The three-show series will benefit the safe reopening of the Playhouse campus, closed since March 2020 due to the global pandemic.

“Cabaret in the Robards” will include “An Evening with Brad Simmons and Tonya Pinkins,” on Saturday June 26, at 8 p.m.; “An Evening with Larry Owens,” on Saturday, July 17, at 8 p.m.; and “An Evening with Ali Stroker,” on Saturday July 24, at 8 p.m. The Robards, officially known as The Jason Robards Theatre at Westport Country Playhouse, was named in memory of the actor, who, along with his wife Lois, supported the historic theater’s 2005 major renovation.

“We’re so excited to have each of these stars bring their unique show to the stage and re-enliven the Robards, which has not seen an audience for over a year,” said Gretchen Wright, Playhouse director of development. “If you’ve missed that feeling you get at a live performance, don’t miss these cabarets!”

Tickets are now on sale to the general public. Limited seating available. Advance sale for Playhouse donors and current season tickets holders began May 11. As the Playhouse resumes its in-person events, Covid-19 health and safety protocols, including social distancing and mask-wearing, will be observed. In consideration of maintaining social distancing in the Robards, the number of tickets currently on sale is 125 seats per performance. As conditions allow, more tickets will be made available.

“An Evening with Brad Simmons and Tonya Pinkins” on June 26 will feature Simmons, concert artist and music director, and Pinkins, Tony Award-winning veteran of nine Broadway shows, numerous off-Broadway shows, daytime dramas, and nighttime series. Concert meets cabaret, as the duo presents Broadway favorites, contemporary covers, classics, and more.

Simmons has shared the stage with Broadway luminaries Alice Ripley, Beth Leavel, Donna McKechnie, in addition to Pinkins, and recording artists Sandi Patty and The B-52s’ Kate Pierson. He was music director for “Lysistrata Jones,” on and off-Broadway; “Mr. & Mrs. Fitch” with John Lithgow; “Me and the Girls” with Alan Cumming; and the musical film, “Hello Again,” with Audra McDonald and Martha Plimpton. Upcoming productions include “Hood, Fancy, Clear” and “To

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Wong Foo.” His recordings are available on any digital platform or visit thebradsimmons.com.

Pinkins received the 2020 Franky Award for extraordinary impact on contemporary theater and performance. She has won the Tony, OBIE, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Garland, LA Drama Critics, Lortel, Audelco, Monarch, NAACP Theatre, Stage Raw, Alfred Drake, and Clarence Derwent awards. She has been nominated for three Tonys, Olivier, Joseph Jefferson, Helen Hayes, Drama League, Soap Opera Digest, NAACP Image, Ovation, NOEL, Audience Choice, Black Theater Alliance, and Saturn awards. The author of “Get Over Yourself! How to Drop the Drama and Claim the Life You Deserve,” Pinkins is also host of the podcast “You Can’t Say That.” She wrote, directed, produced, and starred in the 2020 film “Red Pill,” which has won over 15 international awards.

“An Evening with Larry Owens” on July 17 will spotlight multi-award-winning musical theater actor Owens’ intimately curated cabaret, “Sondheimia,” exploring time, love, and ambition through the music and lyrics of Stephen Sondheim. Music direction and supervision is by Josh Kight. Owens is a performer, writer, director, and comedian. He won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Actor and a Lucille Lortel Award for starring in the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical, “A Strange Loop.” He can be seen on the season four premiere of “High Maintenance” (HBO), “Search Party” (HBOMax), “Helpsters” (AppleTV), “Betty” (HBO), “Dash and Lily” (Netflix), the upcoming season of “Modern Love” (Amazon), the upcoming Miramax feature, “Silent Retreat,” and as a voice on the upcoming animated series “Fairfax” (Amazon). Owens studied drama and improvisation at the School at Steppenwolf and has headlined sold-out venues such as Caroline’s on Broadway. “An Evening with Larry Owens” is sponsored by Judy and Scott Phares.

“An Evening with Ali Stroker” on July 24 will feature the 2019 Tony Award winner for Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her role as Ado Annie in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s “Oklahoma!” This past winter, she starred in the Lifetime holiday film, “Christmas Ever After.” She made history as the first actor in a wheelchair to appear on Broadway in Deaf West’s acclaimed 2015 revival of “Spring Awakening.” She starred in 12 episodes of “The Glee Project,” culminating in a guest role on Fox’s “Glee.” She recurred in the ABC series, “Ten Days in the Valley,” and guest starred on CBS’ “Blue Bloods,” Freeform’s “The Bold Type,” Fox’s “Lethal Weapon,” CBS’ “Instinct,” The CW’s “Charmed,” and Comedy Central’s “Drunk History.” She recently co-wrote a novel, “The Chance to Fly,” which was released by Abrams Books. She’s performed her cabaret act at Green Room 42 and soloed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., New York’s Town Hall, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and Carnegie Hall. Her mission to improve the lives of others through the arts, disabled or not, is captured in her motto: “Turning Your Limitations into Your Opportunities.”

Single tickets are at three support levels: Supporter, \$150; sustainer, \$300, offering premium seating and priority parking; and superstar, \$500, with premium seating, priority parking, a pre-show cocktail party in Playhouse courtyard, and other VIP perks. A series package, at \$1,500, includes the best seats for every cabaret, sponsorship listing, pre-show cocktail parties, priority parking, and opportunity to meet the artist(s) after the show (pending talent approval). Sponsorship of a cabaret evening at \$20,000, or co-sponsorship at \$10,000, includes 10 tickets or five tickets, respectively, to the sponsored performance, premium seating, pre-show cocktail party invitations for sponsor/co-sponsor’s ticketed guests, and opportunity to meet the artist(s) after the show (pending talent approval).

All artists, dates, and formats are subject to change.

To purchase single tickets or series packages to “Cabaret in the Robards,” contact the Playhouse box office at (203) 227-4177, or email boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org. To sponsor one of the evenings, contact Gretchen Wright, Playhouse director of development, at 203-571-1131 or email gwright@westportplayhouse.org.

ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

Founded in 1931, Westport Country Playhouse is celebrating its 90th anniversary year. 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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