

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release: May 18, 2021

Westport Country Playhouse and WSHU Public Radio Partner for Playhouse Radio Theater's Ghost Story, "The Return"

Free-of-charge audio play's broadcast premiere on Saturday, May 29

Westport Country Playhouse Radio Theater, a free-of-charge broadcast series, in partnership with WSHU Public Radio, will present the new, audio play, "The Return," on Saturday, May 29, at noon, followed by a rebroadcast on Sunday, May 30, at 4 p.m. "The Return" is a haunting tale by Kavin Panmeechao, based on the Thai folk legend, "Mae Nahg." Radio station frequencies and locations are listed at wshu.org. "The Return" will also be accessible on the Playhouse's website (westportplayhouse.org) from May 31 through June 20.

"The Return" marks the Playhouse's first play commission for terrestrial radio and online audio platforms, in collaboration with WSHU.

Director of "The Return" and curator of Playhouse Radio Theater is Mark Shanahan, who is also curator of the Playhouse's Script in Hand playreadings.

"What a joy to shepherd the Westport Country Playhouse's continued work in bringing new stories to life through the medium of radio," said Shanahan. "Kavin Panmeechao's wonderful play, 'The Return,' is a ghost story which is as heartbreaking as it is suspenseful. Along with our extraordinary cast of accomplished actors, sound designer John Gromada has crafted a rich and immersive soundscape which will thrill our listeners. I have no doubt that Kavin's retelling of this chilling legend will echo in the audience's ears long after the broadcast ends."

"The Return" takes place in the aftermath of World War II when a young soldier named Dang returns to his village in the jungles surrounding Bangkok to reunite with his wife and newborn baby. He is finally home. So why does he feel utterly alone?

The cast includes Vin Kridakorn as Dang (Thai premiere of "The Father"; "White" - Desert Star nomination; Off-Broadway's "The Brothers Paranormal"; "Lifex3" - Theatre Critics Award, Thailand; Showtime's "Happyish," Netflix' "Bonding," CBS' "Madam Secretary," and the upcoming "Lisey's Story" on AppleTV. www.vinkridakorn.com); Joanna Carpenter as Nahg (Actors Theatre of Louisville, DIMF Festival in South Korea, Prospect Theater Company; upcoming appearances in "Kings Blade," "Clicquot: A Revolutionary Musical"; co-founder of grassroots language learning organization, 86 the Barrier; diversity and inclusion educator; Instagram @thejoannac); Joan Almedilla as Pa Dee, (Broadway's "Miss Saigon"; national tours of Lincoln Center Theater's "The King and I," "Les

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Misérables,” “Jesus Christ Superstar”; regional theater’s “Passing Through,” “Mamma Mia,” “Chess,” among others; performances at Carnegie Hall, Disney Concert Hall, The Apollo Theater; joanarmedilla.com); and Kevin Scheuring as Putt (National Tour of Lincoln Center Theater’s “The King and I”; NY/Off-Broadway’s “On This Side of the World,” “Wearing Black,” “Carousel,” “Lost in Shanghai”; regional theater’s “Remembering Tomorrow,” “Miss Saigon,” Disney’s “When You Wish”; www.kevinschueiring.com).

Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director, will introduce the play.

Playwright Kavin Panmeechao is a New York/L.A.-based actor and writer. Selected acting credits include “Madam Secretary” (CBS), Lincoln Center Theater’s “The King and I” (National Tour/UK/Tokyo), “25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” (National Tour), “Miss Saigon” (Ogunquit Playhouse), and “A Chorus Line” (3-D Theatricals). His plays include “Public Heroics Commission” (Hudson Stage), “Blue – A Playlet” (Cardinal Stage), “One Tough Cookie,” and “Subreddit.”

Director/playwright/adaptor Mark Shanahan appeared at Westport Country Playhouse in “Around the World in 80 Days,” “Tryst,” “Sedition,” “David Copperfield,” “Journey’s End,” and over 20 Script in Hand playreadings. In addition to curating Playhouse Radio Theater, he is curator of the Playhouse’s Script in Hand series and has directed Playhouse Script in Hand readings of “Butterflies Are Free,” with Blythe Danner and Jonathan Groff, and “The Greatest Gift” by Weston playwright David Wiltse, and co-directed with Anne Keefe “Miracle on South Division Street.” New York stage includes “The 39 Steps,” “Small World,” “Checkers,” “Tryst,” “The Shaughraun,” “As Bees in Honey Drown,” and “The Internationalist.” His directorial work has been seen at Alley Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Virginia Stage, Hudson Stage, Theatre Square, The White Heron, Fulton Opera House, Mile Square Theatre, Weston Playhouse, Florida Rep, Penguin Rep, Merrimack Rep, Hangar Theatre, The Cape Playhouse, and many more. He is the author of the Off-Broadway and regional hit comedy, “The Dingdong,” and holiday adaptations of “A Merry Little Christmas Carol” and “A Sherlock Carol.” He is a graduate of Brown University (BA) and Fordham University (MA, faculty). www.mark-shanahan.net.

John Gromada, original music and sound design, is a composer and sound designer for theater, film, television, and dance. He has been on the production team for 10 Westport Country Playhouse shows, including “Of Mice and Men.” Best known for his theater music for plays, he has written scores and designed sound for many critically acclaimed, award-winning Broadway productions. Gromada received a Tony nomination for his work on “The Trip to Bountiful” and has also received three Drama Desk Awards, and the Lucille Lortel, Obie, Henry Hewes, Drama-Logue, EDDY, and Connecticut Critics Circle awards. www.johngromada.com.

Following the audio play will be a brief discussion with playwright and director of “The Return.”

The audio play runs approximately 35 minutes. Complete details at <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/thereturn/>

2021 Season Sponsor is the Eunice and David Bigelow Foundation.

The production was recorded for audio broadcast under strict COVID-19 protocols, with actors recording remotely from their own homes.

The Playhouse’s 2021 Season includes two new virtual productions, “Tiny House,” a timely new comedy, written by Michael Gotch, and directed by Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director, playing June 29 through July 18; and “Doubt: A Parable,” the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning drama written by John Patrick Shanley and directed by David Kennedy, Playhouse associate artistic director, playing November 2 through November 21. Two HD video productions from the Playhouse archives will stream on-demand, beginning with the musical, “Man of La Mancha” (2018), from August 23 through September 5, and another TBA, from September 13 - 26. Three Script in Hand playreadings will include “The Savannah Disputation” by Evan Smith, from June 15 - 20, and two others TBA, October 19 – 24, and December 14 – 19. The complete schedule is available at westportplayhouse.org.

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

Due to the global pandemic, the Playhouse campus remains closed since March 2020. As the Playhouse resumes its in-person events, beginning on June 26 with “Cabaret in the Robards,” Covid-19 health and safety protocols, including social distancing and mask-wearing, will be observed.

For Westport Country Playhouse tickets and information, visit westportplayhouse.org, call (203) 227-4177, or email at boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

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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