

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Westport Country Playhouse Announces Archival Production of John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" Streaming in September**

Westport Country Playhouse will add to its 2021 Season lineup the HD video production from its archives, "Of Mice and Men," by Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize-winning author John Steinbeck, streaming on demand, Monday, September 13 through Sunday, September 26. The classic drama was originally staged at the Playhouse in 2008, directed by Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director.

"Of Mice and Men" includes all of the best elements of our work—a timeless story, memorable performances, theatrical designs—all skillfully brought together by our artistic leader, Mark Lamos," said Michael Barker, Playhouse managing director. "In a season of transition and recovery, this gorgeous high definition film whets our collective appetite for a return to in-person performance, but above all reminds us that great theater transcends medium."

"Of Mice and Men" is based on Steinbeck's 1937 tale of two traveling companions, George and Lennie, who wander the country during the Depression, fantasizing about a better life. George dreams of owning land, working on his ranch, and being his own boss. His mentally challenged partner, Lennie, dreams simply of playing with rabbits. Having encountered problems at their last job, George and Lennie are forced to flee to a new farm for work. The two labor tirelessly at their new job, cautiously saving money to fund their far-reaching goals. When they meet an older man with a similar desire and ample savings, it seems that for once their dreams might be attainable until Lennie's simple-minded strength gets them into trouble yet again. One of the few plays to be adapted by the novelist himself, this version is true to the book and filled with the drama that shot the story to instant acclaim.

The cast is headed by Brian Hutchison as George (Broadway's "The Boys in the Band" in 2018, "The Invention of Love," "Proof"; film version of "The Boys in the Band" in 2020), and Mark Mineart as Lennie (Broadway's "Julius Caesar" with Denzel Washington and "Macbeth" with Kelsey Grammer). The ensemble cast features Mateo Gómez as The Boss, Kene Holliday as Crooks, Matthew Montelongo as Slim, Betsy Morgan as Curley's Wife, Tommy Nohilly as Carlson, Sean Patrick Reilly as Whit, Rafael Sardina as Curley, and Edward Seamon as Candy.

Author John Steinbeck (1902-1968) won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962 and the Pulitzer Prize for his 1939 novel "The Grapes of Wrath." He was born in Salinas, California, of German and Irish ancestry. During summers he worked as a hired hand on nearby ranches, nourishing his impression of the California countryside and its people. Steinbeck also wrote "Tortilla Flat" (1935), "Cannery Row" (1945), "The Pearl" (1947), "East of Eden" (1952) and "Travels with Charley" (1962). In all, he wrote 25 books, including 16 novels, six non-fiction books, and several collections of short stories. Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962 "...for his realistic as well as imaginative writings, distinguished by a sympathetic humor and a keen social perception."

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Director Mark Lamos has helmed many plays at Westport Country Playhouse since 2008, earning Connecticut Critics Circle Awards for his direction of “She Loves Me” (2010), “Into the Woods” (2012), “The Dining Room” (2013), “Man of La Mancha” (2018), and “Mlima’s Tale” (2019). Under Lamos’ artistic direction, the Playhouse was named “Theater Company of the Year” by *The Wall Street Journal* in 2013. Lamos’ extensive New York credits include “Our Country’s Good,” for which he received a Tony Award nomination. A former artistic director at Hartford Stage, he earned the 1989 Tony Award for the theater’s body of work. He was awarded the Connecticut Medal for the Arts as well as honorary doctorates from Connecticut College, University of Hartford, and Trinity College. In 2016 he was the recipient of the John Houseman Award.

The production design team includes Michael Yeargan, scenic design; Jane Greenwood, costume design; Robert Wierzel, lighting design; John Gromada, sound design and composition; B.H. Barry, fight coordinator; Berloni, animal talent; Telsey + Company, casting; and Diane DiVita, production stage manager.

Tickets for streaming “Of Mice and Men” start at \$25. The Playhouse box office staff will provide instructions on how to watch virtual content by logging in at [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org).

“Of Mice and Men” joins the previously announced HD archival video of the 2018 award-winning musical, “Man of La Mancha,” also directed by Lamos, streaming on demand, Monday, August 23 through Sunday, September 5. The Playhouse’s 2021 season also includes two new virtual productions: “Tiny House,” a timely new comedy, from June 29 through July 18, written by Michael Gotch, and directed by Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director; 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, from November 2 through November 21. Script in Hand playreadings will run October 4 – 10, and December 14 – 19, titles TBA. Full schedule is available at [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org). All virtual content in the Playhouse’s 2021 Season will be available on demand for patrons’ convenience, with open captions in Spanish. Playhouse productions are rehearsed and filmed under Covid-19 safety protocols.

2021 Season Sponsor is the Eunice and David Bigelow Foundation. 2021 Season Media Sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio.

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

To purchase tickets, visit [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org), call (203) 227-4177, or email [boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org](mailto: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 90<sup>th</sup> 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.