

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Westport Country Playhouse Presents “An Evening with Tony Award Winner Ali Stroker,” In Person, on July 24**

Westport Country Playhouse will present “An Evening with Ali Stroker,” 2019 Tony Award winner for Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her role as Ado Annie in the Broadway production of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s “Oklahoma!, on Saturday July 24, at 8 p.m. The live, in-person performance is part of the Playhouse’s series, “Cabaret in the Robards,” featuring Broadway musical talents.

“Ali Stroker is nothing less than a force of nature,” said Mark Lamos, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director. “I first experienced her striking, electric stage presence in the powerful Broadway revival of Deaf West’s ‘Spring Awakening’. But that didn’t prepare me for the sheer comic zest and magnitude and Broadway musical savvy she brought to the recent revival of ‘Oklahoma!’ She tore the place apart and stopped the show as Ado Annie-- the best I’d ever seen-- and also brought to the role depth, sweet sensitivity and, well, joy. For that she won a richly-deserved Tony Award. I’m thrilled that she’ll be appearing on the Playhouse stage and can’t wait to see just what she does next, since Ali is a true one-of-a-kind star with all sorts of magic up her sleeve.”

This past winter, Stroker 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.”

Lamos added, “There’s a special resonance in Ali performing on our historic stage, since it’s the same stage that premiered a play called ‘Green Grow the Lilacs’ in 1940. Composer Richard Rodgers was convinced to come to Westport to check it out, and the next thing you know, he and Oscar Hammerstein were writing ‘Oklahoma!’ Please join me in the audience for this very special night, won’t you? Thanks! See you there!”

Tickets for “An Evening with Ali Stroker” start at \$25 for performance only. Supporter tickets, raising funds to reopen the Playhouse, start at \$150 and include VIP perks and pre-show cocktail party.

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**WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE**

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Sponsors for “An Evening with Ali Stroker” are Athena and Daniel Adamson, and Adam Clemens.

The series, “Cabaret in the Robards,” began in June with in-person performances by Broadway’s Tonya Pinkins and Brad Simmons. 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.

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 John Steinbeck’s drama, “Of Mice and Men” (2008), from September 13 - 26. Script in Hand playreadings will be on October 4 - 10, and December 14 - 19, titles TBA. All virtual content in the Playhouse’s 2021 Season will be available on demand for patrons’ convenience, with open captions in Spanish. The complete schedule is available at [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org).

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

To purchase tickets to “An Evening with Ali Stroker,” contact the Playhouse box office at (203) 227-4177, or email [boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org](mailto: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](mailto:gwright@westportplayhouse.org).

#### **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.

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