

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Blaufuss, Public Relations Manager

(203) 227-5137 x197 | (203) 571-1287 | pblaufuss@westportplayhouse.org

For Immediate Release: April 29, 2022

Westport Country Playhouse Commissions Three Playwrights to Develop New Works through a Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award

Westport Country Playhouse announces the first formal group of commissioned playwrights in the theater's 91-year history: Matthew Greene, Monet Hurst-Mendoza, and Johnny G. Lloyd. The commissions are made possible through the Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award, created in 2010 by Tony Award-winning playwright, director, and screenwriter Authur Laurents, who wrote the books for "Gypsy" and "West Side Story"; and Tom Hatcher, an actor and real estate developer, who was Laurents' partner of 52 years.

"Welcoming these three magnificent writers means a great deal to me and to the Playhouse, as a significant incubator of new work," said Mark Lamos, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director. "Though we've been developing new plays and musicals for years, these commissions take us to a new level of importance on the national theater scene. We are extremely grateful to the generosity of the Laurents/Hatcher Foundation, which allows us to support these artists and deepen our relationship to the newest era in the American theater."

Over the course of several years, each playwright will pen a brand-new play, which will be developed and supported by Westport Country Playhouse through its New Works Initiative. By providing appropriate financial and artistic resources, the Playhouse is fostering not only the creation of a new piece of theater, but also the growth and future of these three voices.

Matthew Greene is a playwright, librettist, and lyricist whose works have been seen on both coasts and a few places in between. His play "Thousand Pines" had its world premiere at Westport Country Playhouse, and the autobiographical "Good Standing" played at Theater Row as part of the United Solo Theatre Festival. Other plays include "Gregorian" (Working Artists Theatre Project), "Adam and Steve and the Empty Sea" (Plan B Theatre, New York International Fringe Festival), "#Mormoninchief" (New York International Fringe Festival), "Job Well Done" (national finalist, American College Theatre Festival), and "Bread of Affliction" (Society for the Study of Jewish American and Holocaust Literature). In 2020, he received the Stiles + Drew Prize for a current work in progress and created the socially-distant play "A Midsemester Night's Dream," which will be published this year. He is a proud member of the BMI Musical Theatre Workshop and has taught theater to people of all ages in and out of New York City.

Monet Hurst-Mendoza is a New York City-based playwright from Los Angeles, CA. Her plays have been developed with Rising Circle Theater Collective, Astoria Performing Arts Center, The Flea, WP Theater, The Public Theater, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Westport Country Playhouse, and Long Wharf Theatre, among others. Hurst-Mendoza is an alum of the Emerging Writers Group at The Public Theater, R&D Group at The Civilians, Fresh Ground Pepper's Playground Playgroup, WP Theater Playwrights Lab, and the Van Lier Fellowship at New Dramatists. She has held residencies with The MITTEN Lab and SPACE on Ryder Farm. Her play "Torera" was featured on the 2019

- MORE -

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE T (203) 227-5137 F 203.221.7482 | BOX OFFICE T (203) 227-4177 F (203) 454-3238

westportplayhouse.org

Kilroys List and will be produced by the Alley Theatre in Houston, TX, in their 2022/2023 season. She is currently an executive story editor for the 23rd season of "Law & Order: SVU" and a member of Florida Studio Theatre's Playwright Collective. She has been commissioned by Westport Country Playhouse, Florida Studio Theatre, and The Kennedy Center. Proud member of The Kilroys, The Dramatist Guild, and WGAE. B.A. Marymount Manhattan College.

Johnny G. Lloyd is a New York-based writer and producer. He was the winner of the 2021 Bay Area Playwrights Festival ("The Problem With Magic, Is:") and has been commissioned by Clubbed Thumb and Second Stage Theatre. Currently he is a member of the Ars Nova PlayGroup and was previously a member of the Clubbed Thumb Early-Career Writers Group and Liberation Theatre Company's Writing Residency. Lloyd is a collaborator with Theater in Quarantine and SalonSéance. He is the director of artistic development at The Tank and producing director for InVersion Theatre. MFA: Columbia University. jglloyd.com

Throughout its 91 years, Westport Country Playhouse has been home to 61 world premiere productions of new plays and musicals, including "Thousand Pines" by Matthew Greene, directed by Austin Pendleton; "Love and Money" by A. R. Gurney, directed by Mark Lamos, and co-produced with New York's Signature Theatre; "Oblivion" by Carly Mensch, directed by Mark Brokaw; and "Harbor" by Chad Beguelin, also directed by Lamos.

The funding for the Playhouse's News Works Initiative comes from generous individuals and grant programs. The 2022 Initiative is supported by Athena and Daniel Adamson, Michele and Marc Flaster, and Teresa Nardoizzi, as well as the Burry Fredrik Foundation, Laurents/Hatcher Foundation, Lucille Lortel Foundation, and Shubert Foundation, Inc.

For more information on Westport Country Playhouse or to buy tickets, visit www.westportplayhouse.org, or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529, or visit Westport Country Playhouse, 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. 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; 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.

###