

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Presents Script in Hand Playreading of “The Scream: A Musical Comedy Fantasy”

Four Broadway veterans are backed by live music for an inventive new work

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of “The Scream: A Musical Comedy Fantasy,” on Monday, June 13, at 7 p.m. The live performance will be captured on film for on-demand streaming, from Thursday, June 16 through Sunday, June 19. Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors bring the words to life without sets or costumes.

“What a joy to offer something a little out of the ordinary this time out with our first ever reading of a new musical in the Script in Hand series!,” said Mark Shanahan, curator of the Playhouse’s Script in Hand playreading series and Playhouse Radio Theater.

“The Scream: A Musical Comedy Fantasy” is set in 1985 when a Norwegian couple steal the famous painting, “The Scream,” and replace it with the husband’s painting, “The Table,” which they believe to be superior. But “The Scream” is no ordinary captive. As it works its magic, their relationship ruptures, and their minds swirl with new and frightening possibilities. Will they survive their encounter with one of the world’s most iconic works of art?

“‘The Scream’ is both wonderfully funny and surprisingly haunting - a daring piece of theater which digs deeply into the mysteries of great art as well as the complexities of a fragile marriage,” noted Shanahan. “Certainly, many will know Edward Munch’s iconic painting of ‘The Scream,’ but the writers of this slyly inventive new musical have ensured we will never look at this famous work of art the same way again.”

The cast includes Allen Gilmore as Thomas Hurdal (worked frequently with celebrated directors Bartlett Sher, Christopher Bayes, Carl Cofield, Robert Falls, and the late Michael Langham; Yale Repertory Theatre’s “Choir Boy”; nominated for AuDelCo, Connecticut Critics Circle, Broadway World, St. Louis Critics Circle, Black Theater Alliance, and Jefferson awards; 2015 Lunt-Fontanne/Ten Chimneys Fellow; ensemble member of Chicago’s Congo Square Theater Company); Maia Guest as Ingrid Thijssen (films “Moonfall,” “Silent Partner”; series regular on the spy drama, “Granite Flats”; appearances on BBC, PBS, VH1, Lifetime; co-adapted, directed, and starred on the London stage in “Giovanni’s Room”; NYC’s LaMama ETC, Primary Stages, Westbeth, HERE; regional theater’s Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Geva, Playhouse on Park, Capital Rep, World’s End Theater); Ryan Lowe as The Scream (10 years in Broadway’s “Chicago”; opera’s “Turandot,” “L’Elisir d’Amore,” “Carmen,” “Cosi fan Tutti,” “The Marriage of Figaro”; musical theater’s “Brigadoon,” “A Little Night Music,” “Candide”); and Drew McVety as Osvald/creative producer (Westport Country Playhouse’s Script In Hand reading of “A Sherlock Carol”; Broadway’s “Bandstand,” “The Front Page,” “The Last Ship,”

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“Cyrano de Bergerac,” “Billy Elliot,” “Sunday in the Park with George,” “Spamalot,” “Frozen,” “Big River,” and the original casts of “Titanic” and “The Heidi Chronicles”; First National Tour of “Cabaret,” “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels”; Off-Broadway’s “Corpus Christi” - Drama Desk nomination).

The creative team includes Simon Gray, music (Cambridge-trained Harrington Award winner; veteran of the West End, the Donmar Warehouse, The National Theater, and Cameron Mackintosh; played, conducted, or composed in every corner of the UK); Raymond Bokhour, lyrics (Broadway’s Mr. Cellophane in “Chicago”; recipient of the Harrington Award and the Ellen Schwartz Award for Outstanding Lyric Writing; his works have been recorded by the London Symphony and the Warsaw Philharmonic); David Bridel, book (internationally renowned director, choreographer, librettist, performer, and award-winning playwright whose work has been seen worldwide at universities, festivals, and theaters; dean of USC School of Dramatic Arts); Christine Bokhour, director (Broadway’s “Chicago,” “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels”; Off-Broadway, regional theatre, concerts and more as a director, actress, singer, and dancer); and Fred Lassen, music direction/piano/associate producer (music director of “Christmas Spectacular Starring the Radio City Rockettes”; Broadway music directing/conducting for “Sing Street,” “Mean Girls,” “King Kong,” “Prince of Broadway,” “Bandstand,” “Once,” “Porgy and Bess,” “South Pacific,” “Spamalot,” “Cabaret,” “42nd Street,” “Once Upon a Mattress”).

Script in Hand curator 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, and directed readings of “Butterflies Are Free,” with Blythe Danner and Jonathan Groff, and “The Greatest Gift” by Weston playwright David Wiltse. He is the creator and curator of Westport Country Playhouse Radio Theater and writer/director of the Playhouse radio adaptation “A Merry Little Christmas Carol.” New York acting credit 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, Arkansas Rep, White Heron, Fulton Opera House, Weston Playhouse, Florida Rep, Penguin Rep, Merrimack Rep, The Cape Playhouse, and many more. He has written numerous radio plays for White Heron’s Ghost Light Series (featuring Christopher Plummer and Judith Ivey, among others), and is the author of the Off-Broadway and regional hit comedy, “The Dingdong”; “A Merry Little Christmas Carol”; “A Murder at Fernly Hall”; and “A Sherlock Carol,” which premiered last fall Off-Broadway at New World Stages and was nominated as Best Play 2022 by the Off Broadway Alliance Awards. www.mark-shanahan.net

Tickets to attend the playreading in person are \$20. Tickets for on-demand streaming are \$20 individual, \$40 pair, and \$80 household. Each purchase entitles the ticket buyer to one individual link. Running time is approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.

Upcoming Script in Hand playreadings will be on November 14 and December 12, titles to be announced.

The Script in Hand Playreading Series is supported by Stephen Corman and the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation.

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

All audience members are required to show proof of vaccination and to wear masks while inside the Playhouse to ensure the actors stay safe and healthy to avoid performance cancellations. Based on current CDC guidance, N95 and KN95 masks are strongly encouraged. For updates on Covid-19 health and safety protocols at the Playhouse, visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/covid19safety/>

To purchase tickets, visit westportplayhouse.org, call (203) 227-4177, or email 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; 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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