

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Stages Comedy “Straight White Men”

Richard Kline of television’s “Three’s Company” heads six-member ensemble

Westport Country Playhouse will stage the comic satire, “Straight White Men,” by Young Jean Lee, from May 24 through June 5, directed by Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director. The show’s 2018 Broadway run made Lee the first Asian American female playwright to have a work produced there.

The cast includes Richard Kline, who was a series regular on television’s “Three’s Company” as Larry Dallas. The production reunites Kline and Lamos, who were classmates at Northwestern University. Others in the ensemble are Bill Army, Denver Milord, Nick Westrate, Akiko Akita, and Ashton Muñiz.

“The play is a bold, exuberant, very funny comedy-- and then near the end it builds up to a surprising dramatic punch that proves both powerful and moving,” said Lamos. “I’ve wanted to bring it to the Playhouse stage since its premiere at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre Company in 2017.

“Young Jean Lee, the first Asian American female writer in Playhouse history, is one of the most important playwrights working today. No two of her plays are alike, since she’s constantly trying new forms. Here she creates the proverbial ‘well-made play,’ and it really rocks.”

In “Straight White Men,” it’s Christmas Eve, and Ed, played by Kline, has invited his three grown sons back home for pranks, Chinese takeout, and gossip. In between the male bonding rituals and conversations about money, work, and love, they are forced to face their own identities in this alternately hilarious and thought-provoking satire.

Playwright Young Jean Lee said, “‘Straight White Men’ isn’t about privilege or attempting to reveal anything new about it or solve it. I was more curious about the question, ‘if I woke up tomorrow and I was a straight white man, what would I do?’”

This show contains strong language and mature themes; running time is approximately 90 minutes with no intermission. For the Playhouse’s 2022 season only, plays will be consolidated to a two-week performance schedule instead of the usual three-week run.

The six-member ensemble cast includes Richard Kline as Ed (Westport Country Playhouse’s “And a Nightingale Sang” in 2015; television series regular Larry Dallas on “Three’s Company”; Broadway’s “Waitress,” “City of Angels,” “November”; National Company of “Wicked” as The Wizard; www.richardkline.tv); Bill Army as Jake (Broadway’s “The Band’s Visit,” “Act One,” and “Relatively Speaking,” an evening of one-acts by Ethan Coen, Elaine May, and Woody Allen; Off-Broadway’s “The Band’s Visit,” “The Changeling”; Hulu’s “Deadbeat,” YouTube’s “COHAB”); Denver Milord as Matt (Westport Country Playhouse’s “Tiny House” in 2021; Broadway’s “Oklahoma!”; Off-Broadway’s “Terms

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of Endearment," "Meaningful Conversation"; regional theater's "Cabaret"; films "Jack Reacher," "The Last Witch Hunter"; Nick Westrate as Drew (Westport Country Playhouse's "Don Juan" in 2019; Broadway's "Bernhardt/Hamlet," "Casa Valentina," "A Moon for the Misbegotten"; Off-Broadway's "The Boys in the Band" - Drama Desk nomination for featured actor; series regular for three seasons on AMC's "Turn: Washington's Spies"); Akiko Akita as Person in Charge (American Academy of Dramatic Arts; theater's "Dog Sees God," "Charlie Brown"; television's "Gossip Girl," "The Time Traveler's Wife"); and Ashton Muñiz as Person in Charge (Broadway's "The Inheritance," Taylor Mac's "A 24-Decade History of Popular Music"; Off-Broadway's New York Theatre Workshop, The Public Theater; select works at The Guggenheim; dance credits with Marc Jacobs FW 2020, Rihanna; co-founder of Legacy: A Black Queer Production Collective).

Young Jean Lee is a playwright, writer, director, and filmmaker who has been called "the most adventurous downtown playwright of her generation" by *The New York Times* and "one of the best experimental playwrights in America" by *Time Out New York*. She has written and directed 10 shows in New York with Young Jean Lee's Theater Company. Her plays have been performed in more than 80 cities around the world. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, two OBIE Awards, a Prize in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a PEN Literary Award, a United States Artists Fellowship, and the Windham-Campbell Prize.

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 creative team includes Kristen Robinson, scenic design; Fabian Fidel Aguilar, costume design; Masha Tsming, lighting design; Michael Keck, sound design; Ali Solomon, choreographer; Michael Rossmly, fight director; Shane Schnetzler, production stage manager; and Tara Rubin Casting, CSA, Clair Burke, CSA, casting.

2022 Season Media Sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio.

Performance schedule is Tuesday at 7 p.m., Wednesday at 2 and 8 p.m., Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 3 and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. (No Wed. or Sat. matinees during preview week). Special series include Taste of Tuesday (May 24), LGBT Night Out (May 26), Post-Play Dialogues (May 26, 31), Opening Night (May 28), Sunday Symposium (May 29), Backstage Pass (June 1), Thursday TalkBack (June 2), and Open Captions (June 5).

Single tickets for "Straight White Men" start at \$30 during preview performances (May 24-27), and beginning May 28 Opening Night, tickets start at \$50 and are subject to change based upon availability. Buy early for best prices. For information on special offers, including discounts for students, senior citizens, educators, military and first responders, Indigenous peoples, professional playwrights, and groups, as well as options for pay-what-you-will and Westport Library pass, visit www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/box-office/.

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

All audience members must present proof of vaccination and wear a mask at all times while inside Westport Country Playhouse. Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the U.S., requires that actors perform only at theaters where audiences wear masks. For updates on Covid-19 health and safety protocols at the Playhouse, visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/covid19safety/>

For more information and 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.

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