

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release: June 8, 2022

## Westport Country Playhouse Stages Comedy “Kim’s Convenience”

### Named Best Canadian Play and inspired the multi-season Netflix series

Westport Country Playhouse will stage “Kim’s Convenience,” a funny and touching comedy about a Korean family who owns a Toronto convenience store, written by Ins Choi and directed by Nelson T. Eusebio III, from July 5 through July 17. The play inspired a popular, multi-season Netflix comedy series. It also won the 2012 Toronto Theatre Critics Award for Best Canadian Play.

In “Kim’s Convenience,” Mr. Kim, called Appa, and his wife Umma, own and run a convenience store, Kim’s Convenience, in a Toronto neighborhood. Mr. Kim hopes his daughter Janet will take over the store when he retires. However, Janet plans another career path. The Kims’ son Jung ran away from home as a teen. The play follows the fractured but loving family as they follow their dreams.

“I fell head-over-heels in love with ‘Kim’s Convenience’ as soon as I read it,” said Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director. “Then I enjoyed the hit Netflix comedy series based on the play (named by *The New York Times* as one of the top ten international streaming episodic shows of 2021), a show produced by the playwright himself, the gifted Ins Choi.

“In our season of family stories, the one in this sweet, funny, sharp, and ultimately moving play will remind you of your own, no matter what your cultural background may be,” Lamos added. “At the same time it will take you inside the lives of the Korean immigrant family at a little convenience store in Toronto, struggling among themselves and the clash of Western and Eastern cultures that affect the young and the mature in predictably different-- and very funny-- ways.”

Playwright Ins Choi, who will be guest speaker at a Sunday Symposium following the July 10 matinee performance, said, “In a conversation I had with a friend about how to combat the rise of anti-Asian hate crimes, we concluded that in tandem with condemning such abhorrent behaviors, the proactive part was continuing to write and share stories with heart, humor, and craft so people listen, laugh, and can’t deny how similar we all are.”

The five-member cast for “Kim’s Convenience” includes David Shih as Appa (“The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin” at Indiana Rep, Will Eno’s “Gnit” at TFANA, NAATCO’s “Awake and Sing!” at The Public Theater, “Henry VI” at Berkeley Rep, “KPOP” at Ars Nova, “Somebody’s Daughter” at 2ST, “Tiger Style!” at La Jolla Playhouse, “Bike America” at Ma-Yi’, “Billions,” “The Amazing Spider-Man 2”; performs with Only Make Believe for children in hospitals and care facilities); and Chuja Seo as Umma (UK premiere of “Wild Goose Dreams,” “Salt Pepper Ketchup” with InterAct & Passage Theater Company - Barrymore Award nomination for Best Performance, “Wit” at Connecticut’s Playhouse on Park, “Prometheus Bound” at Getty Villa, “Intruder” at Edinburgh Fringe, “Cookin’” at Edinburgh Fringe,

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Islington Festival, New Victory Theater, Minetta Lane Theater; films “The Skin of the Teeth,” “Dog Walker,” “Architect,” “Gravidity,” “Joyce,” “Blink”).

Also, Cindy Im as Janet (“The Chinese Lady” at The Public Theater, “The World of Extreme Happiness” at Manhattan Theatre Club, “Julius Caesar: and “Great Expectations” at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, “4000 Miles” at American Conservatory Theater, more at La Jolla Playhouse, Marin Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Theater, Goodman Theatre, the U.S. and French national touring companies of “11 Septembre 2001,” Netflix’s “Tigertail”); Hyunmin Rhee as Jung (“Emperor’s Nightingale” at Pan Asian Repertory, “Tiger Style!” at Theatresquared, “Oklahoma!” and “The Merry Wives of Windsor” at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, “The Waiting Room” at Primary Stages, “FBI” on CBS, “The Helpsters” on Apple TV+, “Chinoiserie Redux” with Ping Chong’s Fiji Productions; training in theater at Fordham University, contemporary dance and hip hop at Broadway Dance Center Intensive); and Eric R. Williams as Alex and other roles (“Into the Woods,” opp. Amy Adams at The Public Theater, “Playing Hot!” at Ars Nova, tours of “Dreamgirls,” “Hair” at Berkshire Theatre Festival, “Ragtime” at Ogunquit Playhouse, “Passing Strange” at Playhouse on Park, Studio Theater, “Only Murders in the Building” on Hulu, “WeCrashed” on Apple TV+; training at Howard University; [www.ericwilliams.net](http://www.ericwilliams.net).

Playwright Ins Choi was born in South Korea and grew up in Scarborough, now part of the city of Toronto. He is a poet, playwright, and actor who graduated from the acting program at York University in 1998. His first play, “Kim’s Convenience,” was a huge success at the 2011 Toronto Fringe Festival where it won the New Play Contest and Patron’s Pick Award. Subsequently the play was remounted in an acclaimed version by Soulpepper Theatre Company. “Kim’s Convenience” was adapted into a television series airing on CBC. Choi completed a master of theological studies at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto.

Directing “Kim’s Convenience” is Nelson T. Eusebio III, a director, producer, and award-winning filmmaker. He is the associate artistic director at Kansas City Repertory Theatre. Eusebio has directed at theaters throughout the country, including The Public Theater/NYSF, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Baltimore Center Stage. Eusebio was a resident artist at Ensemble Studio Theatre, Target Margin Theatre Institute, and Mabou Mines. He is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and the LCT Directors Lab. He was part of the SPARK Leadership program. He has a B.A. in drama from UC Irvine and an M.F.A. in directing from the Yale School of Drama. He is a former U.S. Marine.

The creative team includes You-Shin Chen, scenic design; Lux Haac, costume design; Marie Yokoyama, lighting design; Twi McCallum, sound design; Zoë Kim and Bibi Mama, dialect coaches; Michael Rossmly, fight director; Megan Smith, production stage manager; and Tara Rubin Casting, CSA, Clair Burke, CSA, casting.

Production Sponsor is Adam G. Clemens. Production Partners are Allen and Lorraine Noveck. 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 (July 5), LGBT Night Out (July 7), Post-Play Dialogues (July 7, July 12), Opening Night (July 9), Sunday Symposium (July 10), Backstage Pass (July 13), Thursday TalkBack (July 14), and Open Captions (July 17). 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. More info at <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/kimsconvenience/>.

Single tickets for “Kim’s Convenience” start at \$30 during preview performances (July 5 - 8), and beginning July 9 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/](http://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. 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](http://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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