

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Tony Award-winning “Hamilton” Star Renée Elise Goldsberry Headlines Westport Country Playhouse Gala on September 17

**Robin de Jesús, Tony Award nominee, will host; Barbara K. Streicker,
board chair emerita, will receive Leadership Award**

Multi-award-winning Broadway star Renée Elise Goldsberry, perhaps best known for her role as Angelica Schuyler in the musical “Hamilton,” will headline Westport Country Playhouse’s 2022 Gala, “Back to the Playhouse!,” on Saturday evening, September 17. The evening will feature Goldsberry’s high-energy concert of Broadway, pop, and soul, backed by a seven-piece band, along with a pre-show cocktail party, live auction, and an after-party with a DJ and dancing—all while providing generous philanthropic support to the Playhouse.

Three-time Tony Award-nominated actor Robin de Jesús will serve as gala host. Barbara K. Streicker, former chair of the Playhouse board of trustees, will receive the Playhouse’s Leadership Award at the event.

Both Goldsberry and de Jesús reside near the Playhouse in Connecticut; Goldsberry in Weston; De Jesús in Norwalk.

“After three long years, we are so excited to finally return to our in-person benefit,” said Mark Lamos, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director. “It is sure to be a fabulous one! With two of my favorite performers—Renée Elise Goldsberry headlining and Robin de Jesús hosting—it will certainly be an unforgettable evening.”

Gala headliner Renée Elise Goldsberry is a multi-hyphenate actress and singer who has delivered award-winning performances both on Broadway and on the screen. She is perhaps best known for her role as Angelica Schuyler in the musical phenomenon “Hamilton,” which has become a cultural touchstone for the ages. Goldsberry’s performance earned her a Tony Award, Grammy Award, Drama Desk Award, and a Lucille Lortel Award. In July 2021, she was nominated for an Emmy Award for the Disney+ film adaptation. Goldsberry currently stars in Tina Fey’s new, Emmy-nominated series for Peacock, “GIRLS5EVA.” Up next, she will be seen in Billy Porter’s film directorial debut “What If.” As a solo artist, Goldsberry garners rave reviews performing to packed crowds in concert halls and symphony spaces all over the country. Her debut album will be released this year.

Host Robin de Jesús is a three-time Tony Award-nominated actor. He can be seen in the Netflix adaptation of “Tick, Tick...BOOM!” (2021), directed by Lin-Manuel Miranda, and the Netflix film, “The Boys in the Band” (2020). Broadway credits include “Rent,” “In the Heights,” “La Cage aux Folles,” “Wicked,” and “The Boys in the Band.”

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Honoree Barbara K. Streicker has been a beloved member of the Playhouse community for over 15 years. She is currently the chair emerita, after serving as board chair from 2014 - 2020. Dividing her time between New York and Westport, Streicker has distinguished herself with active participation in a number of arts, cultural, medical, and educational organizations, including the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation, Planned Parenthood of New York, Lupus Foundation, Milford Fine Arts Council Trust Fund, Advisory Board of Americans for UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), and board of the Girl Scouts Council of Greater New York. In addition to her vast service, Streicker's love of theater has led her to develop and co-produce several plays both on and off-Broadway. She holds an MBA from New York University and a BS from the University of Wisconsin. With her late husband John H. Streicker, chairman of Sentinel Real Estate Corporation, she is a proud mother and grandparent to four children and eight grandchildren.

The gala evening includes a cocktail party under a tent on the Playhouse campus, catered by Queen of Tarts Catering, with passed hors d'oeuvres, food stations, and cocktails, at 5:30p.m.; live auction of experiential packages, honoree presentation, and paddle raise in the theater at 7 p.m.; concert by Renée Elise Goldsberry at 8 p.m.; and after-party at 9 p.m., with DJ, dancing, desserts, and drinks. Dress is festive attire.

Executive Committee includes Tom Coppola, co-chair; Tracey Knight Narang, co-chair; Anna Czekaj-Farber, board chair; Mary Ellen Marpe, development chair; Carin Freidag, auction chair; Judy Phares, gala fundraising chair; Jessica Caldwell; Paige Couture; Marjorie Jacobson; Maggie Lehnerd-Reilly; Ellen Petrino; and Tricia Schwartz. Benefit committee includes Athena and Daniel Adamson; Alisyn Camerota and Tim Lewis; Diane DelVecchio; Terry Nardozi; Barbara Streicker, honoree; Diana and Scott Metro; Amy and Carl Wistreich; MJ and Terry Hogan; Preetika and Ashok Narang; Jane and Rami Leshem; and Holly McCarthy.

Supporter tickets, at \$350 per person, include a ticket to the performance and after-party access. Patron tickets, at \$1,250 per person, include pre-show cocktail party, valet parking, priority seating at performance, recognition as gala donor, and after-party access. Benefactor level tickets, at \$2,500 per person, include pre-show cocktail party, priority parking, premier seating at performance, recognition as gala donor, after-party access, and opportunity to meet the artists following the performance. Under-35 tickets, at \$100 each, include performance and after-party access. Corporate sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Westport Country Playhouse is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation; contributions are tax-deductible, less the value of goods and services received, as provided by law.

Gala proceeds will benefit the non-profit, professional producing theater, now in its 92nd season - its work on stage, with schools, and throughout the community.

All artists, dates, and times are subject to change. 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 [westportplayhouse.org/gala2022](https://www.westportplayhouse.org/gala2022), or call Catherine MacKay, Playhouse operations and special events coordinator, at 203-571-1291. Westport Country Playhouse is located at 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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