

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Hosts “Black Excellence Night,” a Gathering for Black-identifying Patrons, on Wed., Oct. 19

Free, communal event prior to performance of “From the Mississippi Delta”

Westport Country Playhouse will host “Black Excellence Night,” a free-of-charge, communal celebration of Black life and history, on Wednesday, October 19, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., in the Playhouse’s Lucille Lortel White Barn Center. The event is scheduled prior to an 8 p.m. preview performance of “From the Mississippi Delta,” a gripping tale of a Black woman’s rise from poverty to prominence.

“Black Excellence Night” is a spinoff of “Black Out,” inspired in 2019 by playwright Jeremy O. Harris, author of Broadway’s “Slave Play,” to create an environment for a Black-identifying audience to experience theater.

“When Goldie E. Patrick, director, suggested a ‘Black Out Night’ at the Playhouse for ‘From the Mississippi Delta,’ I was immediately on board,” said Kendall Driffin, Playhouse Education and Community Engagement Associate. “It is so important that people of color not only have access to see stories that represent them, but most importantly, feel a genuine sense of belonging in the spaces they see them in. ‘Black Excellence Night’ and the Playhouse are redefining who theater is for.”

Members of the Black community are invited to enjoy drinks provided by 822 Mixology, a Black-owned, New Haven-based business, and food tables. Live jazz will be played by the William Fluker Quartet.

“The Great Migration,” an exhibit curated by the Westport Museum for History and Culture, will be on display in conjunction with the storyline of “From the Mississippi Delta.” The exhibit chronicles the relocation of more than six million Black Americans from the rural South to cities in the North, Midwest, and West from 1916 to 1970, sparked by economic conditions and segregationist laws.

Event space is limited; RSVP is required at bit.ly/WCPBlackExcellence.

Following the party, pay-as-you-will pricing will be available for the 8 p.m. performance of “From the Mississippi Delta.” A Pulitzer Prize nominee and winner of a Los Angeles Drama-Logue Award, “From the Mississippi Delta” depicts the resilience of the human spirit, based on the life of the author, Endesha Ida Mae Holland, Ph.D. Her triumphant journey began in Greenwood, Mississippi--the Delta--where she worked in the cotton fields. Coming-of-age experiences inspired her to dream, sweeping her into the momentum of the civil rights movement.

Director is Goldie E. Patrick. The three-member cast includes Claudia Logan as Woman 1, Tameishia Peterson as Woman 2, and Erin Margaret Pettigrew as Woman 3.

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Production Sponsors are Judy and Scott Phares. 2022 Season Media Sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio. Support for programming for this production is provided from CT Humanities (CTH), with funding provided by the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the Connecticut State Legislature.

“From the Mississippi Delta” runs from October 18 through October 30. More info on the production at <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/mississippidelta/>

For updates on Covid-19 health and safety protocols at the Playhouse, visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/covid19safety/>

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

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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