

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Patricia Blaufuss, Public Relations Manager  
(203) 227-5137 x197 | (203) 571-1287 | pblaufuss@westportplayhouse.org  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 6, 2022

### Westport Country Playhouse Presents Script in Hand Playreading of the Comedy, “Bad Jews”

**“Anyone who is a part of a family, Jewish or not, will see themselves in this story,” said director Jen Waldman.**

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of the comedy, “Bad Jews,” on Monday, December 12, at 7 p.m., directed by Jen Waldman and written by Joshua Harmon. Most recently, Harmon co-wrote with Sarah Silverman the Off-Broadway hit musical, “The Bedwetter.”

“There’s a good reason Joshua Harmon’s ‘Bad Jews’ took the New York and London stage by storm,” said Mark Shanahan, curator of the Playhouse’s Script in Hand series and Playhouse Radio Theater. “Simply put, it’s a powerhouse of a comedy that is fast, furious, and poignant.”

In “Bad Jews,” the younger generation of a Jewish family comes together to grieve in a Manhattan apartment after their beloved grandfather’s funeral. Now that he is gone, who will inherit the precious Chai necklace their grandfather left behind? As “the most religious” of the grandchildren, Daphna believes the meaningful heirloom certainly must go to her. Her cousin Liam, a non-observant and self-proclaimed “bad Jew”, arrives with his non-Jewish girlfriend in tow and stakes his claim to the Chai. Liam’s brother Jonah is caught in the middle. Only one cousin can inherit the necklace, and over the course of one night, a heated and hilarious conversation turns to issues of family, faith, and legacy.

Director Jen Waldman said, “‘Bad Jews’ is a wildly funny and incredibly touching piece of theater. I love a play that can make the audience laugh and cry in a matter of seconds. As a Jewish woman, I can relate to these characters on such a deep level. But the truth is that anyone who is a part of a family, Jewish or not, will see themselves in this story.”

The cast includes Jennifer Apple as Daphna (originated role of Anna in first National Tour of “The Band’s Visit”; founder/executive director, Empowered Artist Collective; MFA American Conservatory Theater; JenniferApple.net); Ben Fankhauser as Liam (Disney’s “Newsies” on Broadway and live capture film; co-author/star of Off-Broadway’s “A Commercial Jingle for Regina Comet”; first National Tour of “Spring Awakening”; BFA Ithaca College; @PlzNfankU); Coby Getzug as Jonah (Broadway/National Tours of “The Band’s Visit,” “The Book of Mormon,” “Spring Awakening,” “Brighton Beach Memoirs”; regional theater’s “The Lieutenant of Inishmore,” “Our Town”); and Maya Musial as Melody (world premiere of “The Virtuous Life of Joseph Andrews” at Penguin Rep Theatre; “No Mercy” with Moxie Arts NY; BFA Ithaca College; www.maya-musial.com).

Playwright Joshua Harmon’s other works include “Significant Other,” “Admissions,” “Skintight, and “Prayer for the French Republic.” He and Sarah Silverman co-wrote the libretto for “The Bedwetter” based on her memoir. Harmon’s plays have been produced on Broadway, the West End, Off-Broadway, across the U.S.,

MORE ▼

[westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org)

25 Powers Court Westport, CT 06880 • ADMIN OFFICE 203 227 5137 • FAX 203 221 7482 • BOX OFFICE 203 227 4177

and internationally in a dozen countries. He is a two-time MacDowell Fellow, an associate artist at Roundabout, and a graduate of Juilliard.

Director is Jen Waldman, who also will read stage directions. Founder of JWS, New York City's premiere acting training studio, and one of Broadway's most sought-after acting coaches, Waldman's clients have appeared in nearly every Broadway musical in the last 15 years. She served as artistic director of the Hangar Theatre, as theater chair of the National Young Arts Foundation, and received a proclamation from the City of New York for her work in support of marriage equality. She has directed in theaters across the country, and began her theatrical career as a Broadway actor ("Wicked" and "Titanic"). Waldman co-hosts "The Long and the Short of It" podcast, with listeners in over 100 countries. [www.jws.community](http://www.jws.community)

Stage manager is Megan Smith, who has been production stage manager for numerous shows and playreadings at Westport Country Playhouse for over 17 years.

Script in Hand curator and director Mark Shanahan appeared at Westport Country Playhouse in "Around the World in 80 Days," "Tryst," "Sedition," "David Copperfield," "Journey's End," 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 playwright/adaptor of the Off-Broadway and regional hit comedy, "The Dingdong"; as well as "A Merry Little Christmas Carol"; "The Murder Of Roger Ackroyd"; "See Monsters Of The Deep" and "A Sherlock Carol," which was nominated as Best Play 2022 by the Off-Broadway Alliance Awards and plays this holiday season at New World Stages Off-Broadway and at the Marylebone Theatre in London. [www.mark-shanahan.net](http://www.mark-shanahan.net)

Tickets for "Bad Jews" are \$20. Running time is approximately 95 minutes with no intermission.

Upcoming Script in Hand playreadings will be on February 13, March 13, and June 12, titles to be announced. Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors bring the words to life without sets or costumes.

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

For full details on the Script in Hand playreading of "Bad Jews," visit [westportplayhouse.org/badjews/](http://westportplayhouse.org/badjews/).

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

Masks are encouraged, but not required. 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](http://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), Instagram (@wcplayhouse), YouTube (WestportPlayhouse), and Twitter (@wcplayhouse).

## **ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE**

Founded in 1931, Westport Country Playhouse is celebrating its 91st 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.

###