

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 3, 2023

Westport Country Playhouse Presents Script in Hand Playreading of Stinging Comedy, “As Bees in Honey Drown”

A fun-filled and insightful social satire that asks, “What is the price of fame?”

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of the stinging comedy, “As Bees in Honey Drown,” on Monday, February 13, at 7 p.m., written by Douglas Carter Beane and directed by Mark Shanahan.

In “As Bees in Honey Drown,” a young, gay, struggling writer named Evan Wyler catches the eye of a fabulously outrageous and wonderfully mysterious woman named Alexa Vere de Vere and is drawn into a whirlwind adventure, hobnobbing among the ‘90s’ New York art scene. Alexa, part Auntie Mame, part Holly Golightly, is a self-described promoter of up-and-coming artists and hires Evan to write a screenplay based on the story of her life. But who is she, really? Even as Evan gets caught up in the romance of Alexa’s promises of fame and fortune, he begins to suspect that all may not be what it seems.

“Douglas Carter Beane’s fine-tuned wit once again delivers a terrific, laugh-out-loud comedy,” said Mark Shanahan, director, and curator of the Playhouse’s Script in Hand series and Playhouse Radio Theater. “Yet, even as Alexa Vere de Vere seduces us all with her madcap persona, Beane’s play cuts deeply, exploring that nefarious question, ‘fame at what price?’”

Shanahan added, “I know our Script in Hand audience will love joining Evan Wyler on his quest to uncover the truth about Alexa Vere de Vere in this fun-filled, social satire...perfect for a winter night at the Playhouse!”

The cast includes Steve Pacek as Evan Wyler. Pacek’s recent credits include regional theater productions of “The 39 Steps,” “The Legend of Georgia McBride,” “Titanic,” “Hand to God,” “Metamorphosis,” “Clybourne Park,” “Peter and the Starcatcher,” “The Glass Menagerie,” “Mary Poppins,” and the world premiere of “See Monsters of the Deep.” He is an alumna of Ithaca College. www.stevepacek.com

Nina Hellman portrays Alexa Vere de Vere. She was in Westport Country Playhouse’s Script in Hand reading of “Bedroom Farce.” Her Off-Broadway work includes “The Internationalist,” for which she received a Lortel nomination, and “Trouble in Paradise,” for which she earned an Obie Award. Film includes a regular role on Netflix’s “Wet Hot American Summer.” Television includes a recurring role on “Nurse Jackie.”

Others in the cast are Seth Andrew Bridges in multiple roles of photographer, Swen, Royalton clerk, and Kaden (Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand playreading of “Murder by Misadventure”; Off-Broadway’s “The Daughter-in Law”; Showtime’s “Billions,” Hulu’s “Only Murders in the Building”; BFA from NYU-Tisch; www.sethandrewbridges.com); Camden Gonzales in multiple roles of Amber, backup singer, secretary, Bethany, Ginny, a second muse (associate choreographer for “Moulin Rouge! The Musical” in the US; national tours of “Hamilton” and “Matilda the Musical”; Broadway’s “Groundhog Day The Musical”; BA in theater from UCLA); Stacie Morgain Lewis in multiple roles of writer, backup singer, Carla, newsstand woman, Denise, Illya, a muse (Westport Country Playhouse’s Script in Hand playreadings of “The Savannah

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Disputation," "Dot"; Broadway's "Sunday in the Park with George," "Wicked," "Urinetown," "Titanic"; Chicago's "Wicked" as Glinda; created Harmonize Kidz, BFA Ithaca College); and Caesar Samayoa as Ronald, skunk, Mike (Broadway's "Come From Away," "Sister Act," "The Pee-Wee Herman Show"; Off-Broadway's "Los Otros," "Love's Labour's Lost"; television's "The Blacklist," "Ray Donovan").

Playwright Douglas Carter Beane earned five Tony nominations and one Olivier nomination. Beane's plays include "The Little Dog Laughed," "The Nance," and "Shows for Days"; musicals include "Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella," "Lysistrata Jones," "Sister Act", and "Xanadu." He wrote the film adaptation of his play "Advice from a Caterpillar," as well as the screenplay for "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar."

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

Stage directions will be read by Kavin Panmeechao, a New York/L.A.-based actor and writer, who penned "The Return" for Westport Country Playhouse's Radio Theater and performed in a Playhouse Script in Hand playreading of "A Merry Little Christmas Carol." Stage manager is Kevin Jinghong Zhu, who was assistant stage manager for "Kim's Convenience" and stage managed a reading of "Tribes," both at Westport Country Playhouse.

Tickets for are \$25. Running time is approximately two hours, including one 15-minute intermission.

Upcoming Script in Hand playreadings will be on Monday, 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 "As Bees in Honey Drown," visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/script-in-hand-beesinhoney/>

All dates, times, titles, and artists are 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, 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 92nd 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.

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