

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Playwright Theresa Rebeck Will Direct Reading of Her Suspenseful “Mauritius” at Westport Country Playhouse**

#### **Rebeck will take the audience on a gripping thrill-ride as both writer and director**

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of Theresa Rebeck’s thriller, “Mauritius,” on Monday, March 13, at 7 p.m., directed by the playwright herself. The play’s title refers to the island of Mauritius (pronounced mr-i-shuhs), the origin of two extremely valuable, rare stamps that incite a conflict to gain their possession.

“I am proud to welcome the remarkable Theresa Rebeck to the Script In Hand family at the Playhouse,” said Mark Shanahan, curator of the Playhouse’s Script in Hand series and Playhouse Radio Theater. “To have Ms. Rebeck join us to direct her own work promises to be a fascinating and unique opportunity for our reading series as we present her powerhouse play.

“‘Mauritius’ is a terrific thriller - crackling with suspense and intrigue from the first page to the last,” noted Shanahan. “The script delivers a tightly-paced tale filled with duplicitous and cunning characters, all while plumbing the depths of a long-simmering family conflict. Yet, even as Rebeck puts us on the edge of our seats, wondering who will walk away a winner in the battle over a pair of rare stamps, she infuses the play with her own signature, wicked sense of humor. I can’t wait to have her take us all on this gripping thrill-ride as both writer and director for an evening of theater not to be missed at the Playhouse.”

In “Mauritius” two estranged half-sisters discover, after their mother’s death, a book of rare stamps that may include the crown jewel for collectors. One sister tries to collect on the windfall, while the other resists for sentimental reasons. In this riveting tale, a seemingly simple sale becomes dangerous when three seedy, high-stakes collectors enter the sisters’ world, willing to do anything to claim the rare find as their own.

Theresa Rebeck is a widely produced writer for stage, film, television, and novels, whose work can be seen and read throughout the United States and internationally. With four plays produced on Broadway, Rebeck is the most Broadway-produced female playwright of our time.

Rebeck’s Broadway credits include “Bernhardt/Hamlet” (starring Janet McTeer), “Dead Accounts” (starring Katie Holmes), “Seminar” (starring Alan Rickman), and “Mauritius” (starring F. Murray Abraham). Other New York productions of her work include “Seared” (starring Raul Esparza) at MCC Theater; “Downstairs” (starring Tim Daly and Tyne Daly); “The Scene” (starring Tony Shalhoub); “The Water’s Edge,” “Loose Knit,” “The Family of Mann,” and “Spike Heels” at Second Stage; “Bad Dates,” “The Butterfly Collection,” and “Our House” at Playwrights Horizons; “View of the Dome” at New York Theatre Workshop; and “The Understudy” at Roundabout Theatre Company, which also was produced at Westport Country Playhouse in 2018. Other notable plays include “Poor Behavior,” “What We’re Up Against,” and “Omnium Gatherum” (co-written), which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2013. Her latest play, “Mad House,” had a critically acclaimed world premiere in summer 2022 on London’s West End, starring David Harbour and Bill Pullman.

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She's currently working on a musical adaptation of "Working Girl," with music and lyrics by Cyndi Lauper. As an author, Rebeck has written three novels and a book of comedic essays about writing and show business.

Rebeck made her NYC directorial debut with Rob Ackerman's play "Dropping Gumballs on Luke Wilson" at The Working Theatre, and directed the world premiere of her new comedy "Dig" at the Dorset Theatre Festival in Vermont, where she also serves as resident playwright. Her new podcast play, "Nightwatch" (starring Norbert Leo Butz), produced by Dorset Theatre Festival, is now available on The Broadway Podcast Network.

In television, Rebeck created the NBC showbiz drama "Smash," and has written for "Canterbury's Law," "LA Law," "NYPD Blue," "Law & Order: Criminal Intent," "Dream On," "Brooklyn Bridge," and many more. Her produced feature films include the big-budget, all-female spy thriller "355" (co-written with Simon Kinberg for Jessica Chastain's production company), and "Trouble" (writer/director), starring Angelica Huston and Bill Pullman.

For her work on "NYPD Blue," Rebeck won the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Award, the Writers' Guild of America Award for Episodic Drama, the Hispanic Images Imagen Award, and the Peabody Award. Other Awards include a GLAAD Award (for "Smash"), the National Theatre Conference Award (for "The Family of Mann"), the William Inge New Voices Playwriting Award (for "The Bells"), the PEN/Laura Pels Foundation Award, the Athena Film Festival Award, an Alex Award, a Lilly Award, and more. In 2011, Rebeck was named one of the 150 Fearless Women in the World by *Newsweek*.

Originally from Cincinnati, Rebeck holds an MFA in Playwriting and a PhD in Victorian Melodrama, both from Brandeis University. She has taught at Brandeis University and Columbia University and currently holds the Lyndall Finley Wortham Chair in Performing Arts at the University of Houston, where she teaches playwriting.

The cast for "Mauritius" will be announced soon.

Script in Hand curator 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 has played at New World Stages Off-Broadway and at the Marylebone Theatre in London. [www.mark-shanahan.net](http://www.mark-shanahan.net)

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

For full details on the Script in Hand playreading of "Mauritius," visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/script-in-hand-mauritius/>

Upcoming Script in Hand playreading will be on June 12, November 13, and December 11, 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.

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](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 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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