

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Westport Country Playhouse Adds More Script in Hand Playreadings, New Works, and Family Festivities to 2023 Season**

**“We’ll be open more often, with more entertainment options for our community.”  
– Gretchen Wright, Interim Managing Director**

Westport Country Playhouse announces the addition to its 2023 season of more Script in Hand playreadings, New Works playreadings, Family Festivities presentations, and Mic in Hand musical events, a new spin-off of the Script in Hand series.

“The pandemic’s impact on theater attendance and ticket sales forced us to cut back our 2023 season from five productions to three,” said Gretchen Wright, interim managing director. “As promised, we’re now filling in the gaps in our performance calendar with additional broadly appealing programming. We plan to be open more often, with more entertainment options for our community.”

Wright added, “Stay tuned for other exciting events to come!”

The inaugural Mic in Hand musical concert will be “Ari Axlerod - A Place for Us: A Celebration of Jewish Broadway,” on Monday, May 15, at 7 p.m. The internationally acclaimed, award-winning show honors the songs, stories, and contributions to American musical theater by Jewish composers, such as Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Schwartz, and Carole King. Tickets are \$25.

Agatha Christie’s “The Murder of Roger Ackroyd,” a Script in Hand playreading on Monday, June 12, at 7 p.m., is newly adapted for the stage by Mark Shanahan from Christie’s novel. Shanahan, Script in Hand curator, will also direct. The plot focuses on a murder, a mansion, a mysterious cast of suspects, and a puzzle which can only be solved by the great Hercule Poirot himself. Hailed by as “the best whodunit ever written,” the masterpiece of detective fiction cemented Agatha Christie’s reputation as the “Queen Of Crime.”

The remaining Script in Hand season will include newly added dates August 21 and September 18, and previously announced November 13 and December 11. Titles for these evenings will be announced soon.

Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors bring the words to life without sets or costumes. The series is supported by Joyce Hergenhan and the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation. Tickets are \$25.

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## **New Works and Family Presentations**

New Works at the Playhouse will offer readings of three brand new theater pieces and an opportunity for audience members to meet the playwright in the lobby following the reading. The series is dedicated to the incubation of plays, musicals, and other works of theater, the development of which are important not only to the Playhouse stage, but to the vitality of the larger art form.

The New Works at the Playhouse series begins with “Bad Accents,” on Monday, April 24, at 7 p.m., written by Matthew Greene and directed by Liam Lonegan, Playhouse assistant artistic director. What starts out as a light-hearted, murder-mystery dinner party among old friends quickly turns into a whodunit in its own right, as crimes from the past resurface in deadly and outrageous ways. Other dates in the New Works at the Playhouse series are June 5 and October 2, titles to be announced. Tickets are \$25. New Works at the Playhouse is sponsored by Marietta Battaglia White.

Newly added Family Festivities presentations include two musicals, “The Pout-Pout Fish” on Sunday, May 21, and “The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System” on Sunday, June 4. Each show is produced by TheaterWorksUSA. Performances, at 1 and 4 p.m., are approximately one-hour in length. Tickets are \$25 each. Family programming is supported by Roz and Bud Siegel.

“The Pout-Pout Fish,” for grades pre-K through two, is a sweeping oceanic musical adventure based on *The New York Times* bestselling series by Deborah Diesen, with illustrations by Dan Hanna. With a cast of whimsical puppets and live performers, the plot focuses on Mr. Fish who sets out on a quest to find Miss Clam’s missing pearl and discovers there is more to him than his permanently plastered pout.

“The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System,” for grades K through five, is about a class that gets lost on the way to the planetarium. However, Ms. Frizzle saves the day by blasting into outer space for an epic interplanetary field trip.

The Playhouse’s three-production 2023 season includes the Tony Award®-winning musical, “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” celebrating in sassy song and dance the legendary composer Fats Waller, playing April 11 through April 29; a reimagining of “Dial ‘M’ for Murder,” the suspenseful thriller of blackmail and revenge, running from July 11 through July 29; and “School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play,” a buoyant and biting comedy exploring the universal similarities and glaring differences facing teenage girls across the globe, playing from October 24 through November 11.

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

For more information and tickets, visit [www.westportplayhouse.org](http://www.westportplayhouse.org), email [boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org](mailto:boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org), or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, Tuesday through Friday, 12 to 5 p.m. Stay connected to the Playhouse at [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org), on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

### **ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE**

Founded in 1931, the mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced *theater worth talking about* 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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