

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Names Mark Shanahan Incoming Artistic Director for 2024-25 Season

Shanahan, currently serving as curator of the Playhouse's Script in Hand playreading series, will succeed Mark Lamos in March 2024.

Westport Country Playhouse's board of trustees announced today that director, playwright, and actor Mark Shanahan has been named as incoming artistic director for the 2024-25 season. He will officially assume the artistic director position in March 2024. Currently, Shanahan is curator of the Playhouse's Script in Hand playreading series.

"The Board is just thrilled to partner with Mark in this next chapter," said Athena Adamson, chair, Westport Country Playhouse board of trustees. "He brings enthusiasm, talent, and experience, and a deep commitment to the Playhouse, which will be invaluable to us. We really feel he brings the right energy and vision to this theater, and a desire to connect with his audience."

Shanahan will succeed artistic director Mark Lamos, who announced in May his planned retirement in January 2024 after 15 seasons. Lamos' final directing work, a new adaptation of the classic thriller, "Dial M for Murder," is now on stage through July 30.

With his appointment, Shanahan brings a vision for the Playhouse's new trajectory, building on the historic theater's vital connection to the community as well as promoting quality entertainment, growth, and sustainability going forward.

"I arrived at the Playhouse nearly 20 years ago, performing as an actor in 'Journey's End'," said Shanahan. "I could never have guessed my Playhouse journey was only beginning. Like so many who have passed through its doors, I immediately fell in love with the theatre's rich history and beauty, and the artistry presented on its stage. There's nothing like our big old red barn when filled to capacity. It is an honor to be invited by the board to serve this remarkable institution's loyal audience and help it find ways to grow.

"Like so many theatres across the country, the Playhouse faces challenges. But I've personally witnessed the passion and love this community has for its theatre, and I know that together we can usher in a new chapter for the Westport Country Playhouse which will honor its wonderful theatrical heritage while forging new and exciting paths ahead," stated Shanahan.

"I look forward to planning a '24-'25 season which will fill the Playhouse with laughter, music, thrills, and heart, delivered by artists of the highest caliber," he noted.

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WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

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Shanahan is a New York-based theatre artist whose work has been seen on and Off-Broadway, internationally, and at numerous regional stages across the country.

He is the writer/director of *The New York Times* Critics' Pick "A Sherlock Carol" (Off-Broadway Alliance nomination, Best New Play 2021), playing two seasons in New York and annually at London's Marylebone Theatre. He recently directed his own adaptation of "Agatha Christie's The Murder of Roger Ackroyd," in partnership with Agatha Christie Ltd., premiering this month at the Tony Award-winning Alley Theatre. He is the author of "A Merry Little Christmas Carol," "See Monsters of the Deep," the Off-Broadway and regional hit comedy "The Dingdong," as well as numerous radio plays as creator of the White Heron Ghost Light series, featuring Christopher Plummer, Judith Ivey, Rhonda Ross, and other notables.

Shanahan has directed at stages around the country such as Alley Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Virginia Stage, Arkansas Rep, White Heron, Mile Square Theatre, Hudson Stage, Theatre Squared, Fulton Opera House, Weston Playhouse, Orlando Shakespeare Festival, Florida Rep, Penguin Rep, Merrimack Rep, The Cape Playhouse, and many more.

As an actor, he has appeared on and Off-Broadway ("The 39 Steps," "Tryst," "The Shaugraun," and others) and at many celebrated regional theatres.

Shanahan first appeared on the Westport Country Playhouse stage as an actor in "Journey's End" (2005). Leading roles followed in "David Copperfield," directed by Joanne Woodward and Annie Keefe, (2005), "Sedition" (2007), "Tryst" (2008), and "Around the World in 80 Days" (2009). He has also acted in over 20 Script in Hand playreadings, and in 2019 he succeeded Anne Keefe as curator of the Script In Hand playreading series which continues to thrive under his stewardship.

Shanahan is also the creator and curator of Westport Country Playhouse Radio Theater, in partnership with WSHU Public Radio, and served as writer/director of the Playhouse radio adaptation of "A Merry Little Christmas Carol," and as director of scripts commissioned for the series.

He is proud to participate each year as the writer/director of the annual gala for The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, a summer camp founded by Paul Newman to serve seriously ill children and their families.

He is a graduate of Brown University (BA) and Fordham University (MA, former adjunct faculty).
www.mark-shanahan.net.

For Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit westportplayhouse.org or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Instagram (wcplayhouse), and YouTube (WestportPlayhouse). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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