

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Westport Country Playhouse Brings to Its Stage “First Lady of Song: Cherise Coaches Sings Ella Fitzgerald” from October 27- November 5**

Westport Country Playhouse will bring to its stage, “First Lady of Song: Cherise Coaches Sings Ella Fitzgerald,” for a one-week run, from Friday, October 27 through Sunday, November 5.

Broadway actress and recording artist Cherise Coaches stars in a concert event saluting one of America's favorite jazz singers, Ella Fitzgerald. Coaches effortlessly emits the sultry swing and playful joy that made Ella an American treasure. Classic tunes include "Summertime," "The Lady Is a Tramp," and "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing." Coaches will be joined on stage by a band of piano, bass, drums, and woodwinds.

Weaving beloved songs with personal, heartfelt stories, Coaches reflects on Ella Fitzgerald's iconic artistry and celebrates her rags to riches life story.

“First Lady of Song” replaces the Playhouse's previously announced fall production of “School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play,” which was canceled last spring to cut costs as the historic theater faced financial challenges.

Beth Huisiking, Playhouse acting managing director, said, “‘First Lady of Song’ comes to us from Artists Lounge Live, a Chicago-based production company. It's a high-quality, total package, with set, costumes, marketing materials, and other elements, thus saving the considerable cost of producing a show ourselves. The Playhouse will resume mounting our own theatrical productions in fall 2024, under the artistic direction of Mark Shanahan.”

Cherise Coaches is a Chicago-born/Los Angeles-based actress, recording artist, songwriter, vocal arranger/producer, and voice coach. Coaches appeared on Broadway in the musical “Waitress” as well as the National Tour of “Disenchanted: The Musical.” *Chicago Theatre Review* calls her, “transcendent... a gifted, glittering songstress.” Coaches recently appeared in and served as vocal supervisor for the reimagined “Gospel at Colonus” in both Chicago and Los Angeles. Other theater credits include “Hair” (Dionne), “Dreamgirls” (Charlene), “A New Attitude: In Tribute to Patti LaBelle” (Young Patti), and the musical revue “Dynamite Divas” where she dazzled audiences in the styles of legends Dinah Washington, Beyoncé, and Patti LaBelle.

Coaches was honored with a Black Theater Alliance nomination for the Phylicia Rashad Award for Most Promising Actress. She also appeared on tour with Artists Lounge Live as a featured vocalist in “Aretha Franklin: Queen of Soul,” “Higher and Higher with Chester Gregory,” and “Signed, Sealed, Delivered: John-Mark McGaha Sings Stevie Wonder.” Television credits include “The Chi” and “Empire.” Film credits include “Plow” and “The Terrible Tenth.” Additionally, Coaches records, writes,

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

and produces neo-soul music, available now on all streaming platforms. IG/TikTok/Twitter:  
@cherisecoaches

Artists Lounge Live, the show's production company, was created by the married team of executive producer Michael Ingersoll and artistic director Angela Ingersoll. <https://artistslounge.com/>

Production Sponsors are Judy and Scott Phares. Production Partners are Paige and Jodi Couture. Corporation Production Partner is Cohen and Wolf, P.C. 2023 Media Sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio.

Performance schedule is Tuesday at 7 p.m., Wednesday at 2 and 7 p.m., Thursday at 7 p.m., Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 3 and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Special series include Pride Night (November 2) and Open Captions (November 5).

The play is recommended for age 12 and up. Running time is approximately 100 minutes with one 15-minute intermission.

Single tickets start at \$35 and are subject to change based upon availability. Buy early for best prices. For information on special offers, including discounts for students, senior citizens, educators, military and first responders, Indigenous peoples, professional playwrights, and groups, as well as options for pay-what-you-will and library passes visit [www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/box-office/](http://www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/box-office/).

For more information and tickets, visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/first-lady-of-song-cherise-coaches-sings-ella-fitzgerald/>

The complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org). All play titles, artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

For more information and to buy tickets, visit [www.westportplayhouse.org](http://www.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), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

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