

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Annual Gala on Saturday, October 3

“From the Page to the Stage” benefit features performances by Broadway, television, and film talents, pays tribute to the Playhouse’s 95 years, and presents Leadership Award.

Westport Country Playhouse will stage a one-night-only fundraiser, “From the Page to the Stage,” on Saturday, October 3. Broadway, television, and film talents, including **Santino Fontana, Dan Lauria, Wendie Malick, Javier Muñoz, James Naughton, Kelli O’Hara, and NaTasha Yvette Williams**, will salute productions that have gone from the page to the stage at the Playhouse during its 95 years since its founding in 1931. **Joyce Hergenhan**, Playhouse trustee and sponsor of the Playhouse’s Script in Hand playreading series, will receive the 2026 Playhouse Leadership Award.

The evening’s schedule includes a 5:30 p.m. pre-show reception; 7 p.m. curtain with live auction, presentation of award to honoree, and performance; and a 9 p.m. after-party in the Lucille Lortel White Barn Center. Catering is by Diane Browne Catering. Reception music is by Chris Coogan. Attire is black and white semi-formal.

Playhouse Leadership Award honoree **Joyce Hergenhan** is a retired corporate communications executive who spent 22 years at General Electric, serving as vice president for communications and president of the GE Foundation. Throughout her distinguished career, she has received numerous lifetime achievement honors and has served on the boards of organizations including Westport Country Playhouse, Jackie Robinson Foundation, Fairfield Museum and History Center, and Syracuse University. A graduate of Syracuse University and the Columbia Business School, she has been recognized by both institutions for her outstanding professional achievements. Her longstanding commitment to the arts includes supporting Westport Country Playhouse as a sponsor of its Script in Hand Playreading Series.

Santino Fontana is a Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Obie, and Lortel award-winning actor best known for “Tootsie” on Broadway and as the voice of Prince Hans in Disney’s “Frozen.” His 10 Broadway credits also include “Hello, Dolly!” opposite Bernadette Peters, “Act One” opposite Tony Shalhoub, “Cinderella” (Tony nom), “The Importance of Being Earnest,” “Billy Elliot,” and “Brighton Beach Memoirs.” On screen, he has appeared in “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” “Crazy Ex-Girlfriend,” and more.

Dan Lauria is best known as the dad on the hit television series, “The Wonder Years.” He has starred, recurred, and guest starred in over 70 television episodic programs, as well as in more than 20 “Movie of the Week” productions and a score of feature films. He has performed, written, or directed over 50 professional stage productions. On Broadway, he starred as legendary coach Vince Lombardi in “Lombardi,” as well as in “A Christmas Story: The Musical.” He co-created the Durango Play Festival.

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Wendie Malick is an award-winning actor, best known for her television roles as Nina Van Horn on “Just Shoot Me!,” Victoria Chase on “Hot in Cleveland,” and, most recently, Dr. Julie Barham on Apple TV+’s “Shrinking.” Films include “The American President,” “Racing Stripes,” “Adventureland,” and “7000 Miles.”

Javier Muñoz is best known for starring and co-creating the role of Alexander Hamilton as part of the original cast of “Hamilton” on Broadway. He got his break starring as Usnavi in “In the Heights” on Broadway. He starred in the musical adaptation of “The Devil Wears Prada,” in the role of Nigel Owens. Muñoz will soon return to Broadway, starring in the upcoming rock musical “Galileo,” opposite Raúl Esparza.

James Naughton has won two Tony Awards, for “City of Angels” and “Chicago.” He directed two plays on Broadway, Arthur Miller’s “The Price,” and “Our Town,” starring Paul Newman, which began at Westport Country Playhouse. His films include “The Glass Menagerie,” with Joanne Woodward, “The Paper Chase,” “First Wives Club,” and “The Good Mother.” He won the MAC Award as “best male vocalist” for his concert show, “Street of Dreams,” presented by Mike Nichols.

Kelli O’Hara received a Tony Award for her performance in “The King and I.” Other Broadway shows include “South Pacific,” “The Bridges of Madison County,” “Nice Work If You Can Get It,” “The Pajama Game,” “The Light in the Piazza,” “Days of Wine and Roses,” “Fallen Angels,” “Sweet Smell of Success,” “Follies,” “Dracula,” and Jekyll & Hyde.”

NaTasha Yvette Williams is a Grammy winner/Tony-nominated actress for “Some Like It Hot” (Sweet Sue), “Wicked” (Madame Morrible), “Tina: The Tina Turner Musical” (Zelma), “Chicken and Biscuits” (Brianna), “Waitress” (Becky), “Chicago” (Mama Morton), “A Night with Janis Joplin” (Aretha, Joplinaire), “The Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess” (Mariah), “The Color Purple” (Sofia). Selected TV/Film credits: “Run the World,” “Partner Track,” “Harlem.” @Natashayvettewilliams

Many of this year’s performers have previously graced the Playhouse stage in productions, playreadings, and fundraisers.

The evening’s director is **James Glossman** who will helm several short playreadings commemorating the Playhouse’s history. Glossman recently directed the Script in Hand playreading of Michael Tucker’s, “A Tailor Near Me.” His other credits include the U.S. premiere of John Cleese’s “Bang Bang!, and east coast premiere of Jeff Daniels’ “Flint and Guest Artist.” Music supervisor is **Mary-Mitchell Campbell**, conductor, music director, orchestrator, composer, and arranger who crosses genres between Broadway, pop, and classical styles of music. Campbell’s Westport Country Playhouse credits include music directing many fundraising galas and PBS’ “Stars on Stage from Westport Country Playhouse.” Producer is **Kevin Duncan**.

Benefit tickets start at \$250. A portion of the price is tax deductible. Tickets may be reserved by calling the Playhouse box office at 203-227-4177; or online at <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/gala-2026/>

All proceeds from this annual fundraiser support Westport Country Playhouse, a nonprofit performing arts center and professional producing theater, and help sustain its work both on stage and throughout the community.

The 2026 Gala Committee includes **Kerri Joller**, Gala chair, **Athena Adamson**, **Carin Freidag**, **Ben Frimmer**, **Jonathan Levy**, **Claudine Maidique**, **Elizabeth Marks**, **Elizabeth Salem**, **Trish Schwartz**, **Alison Smith**, and **Michael Streicker**.

Beverage Sponsors are Streicker Wines. Botanical décor is generously provided by Gilbertie’s Herb and Garden Center. Piano is provided by Falcetti Pianos. 2026 Programming and Season Sponsor is Barbara Streicker. Media sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio. Westport Country Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

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More information at: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/gala-2026/>

A complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at [westportplayhouse.org](https://www.westportplayhouse.org). All artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

For Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit [westportplayhouse.org](https://www.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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