

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Westport Country Playhouse Honors Kristin Chenoweth and Mary-Mitchell Campbell at Annual Fundraiser on Saturday, Sept. 14**

#### **“The Best Is Yet to Come” benefit pays tribute to Cy Coleman’s music and presents Westporters Harold Bailey, Jr., and Bernicestine McLeod Bailey with Leadership Award**

Tony Award-winning Broadway star Kristin Chenoweth and Drama Desk Award-winning music director Mary-Mitchell Campbell will be honored at a one-night-only fundraiser at Westport Country Playhouse, on Saturday, September 14, at 7 p.m. Both artists are Playhouse alumni, having appeared on the historic Playhouse stage in past fundraising events. Chenoweth and Campbell will perform at the event as well as other artists to be announced soon.

The benefit will celebrate the music of multi-Emy, Grammy, and Tony Award-winning composer Cy Coleman, with the honorees and special guests performing Coleman’s hits, including “The Best Is Yet to Come,” which is the evening’s theme, and music from his Broadway shows “Sweet Charity,” “Barnum,” “On the Twentieth Century,” and more.

The 2024 Westport Country Playhouse Leadership Award will be presented to Westporters Harold Bailey, Jr. and Bernicestine McLeod Bailey.

“Honoring two great artists in Kristin Chenoweth and Mary-Mitchell Campbell is the perfect way to celebrate the Playhouse and kick off a new season of plays beginning this fall with the promise that indeed, the best is yet to come on our stage!,” said Mark Shanahan, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director. “With Cy Coleman’s enchanting music setting the scene, we know this will be an unforgettable night of song, laughter, friendship, and the opportunity to joyfully praise Harold Bailey, Jr. and Bernicestine McLeod Bailey for their leadership in our community.”

**Kristin Chenoweth** is an Emmy® and Tony® Award-winning actress, singer, and *New York Times* bestselling author. Chenoweth’s extensive Broadway experience includes roles in “Steel Pier” (Theater World Award), “You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown” (Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards), “Wicked” (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle nominations), “The Apple Tree” (Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle nominations), “On the Twentieth Century” (Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle awards, Tony nomination), and others. She has starred in films, such as “Annie,” “Bewitched,” “RV,” and television, including “Schmigadoon,” “The West Wing,” “Glee,” (Emmy nominated), “Pushing Daisies” (Emmy winner), and “The Music Man.” Her Westport Country Playhouse credits are “For the Children” (2001 fundraiser), “The Ladies Who Sing Sondheim” (2006 fundraiser), and “Kristin Chenoweth in Concert” (2009 fundraiser).

**Mary-Mitchell Campbell** is a conductor, music director, orchestrator, composer, and arranger who easily crosses genres between Broadway, pop, and classical styles of music. She has served as music

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25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880  
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director for many Broadway shows, including “The Prom,” “Mean Girls,” “Company,” “Sweeney Todd,” and “Some Like It Hot,” and is the newly announced music director for New York City Center’s “Encores!” Campbell’s concert career includes performances with Kristin Chenoweth, Gavin Creel, Jessica Vosk, and Raul Esparza. In her pop career, she has worked with Alicia Keys, Katy Perry, Carole King, Amy Grant, Kelly Clarkson, James Taylor, Marc Anthony, and Josh Groban, among others. Campbell’s Westport Country Playhouse credits include music directing 12 fundraising galas from 2006 through 2016, and PBS’ “Stars on Stage from Westport Country Playhouse,” featuring Gavin Creel, in 2022.

**Bernicestine McLeod Bailey** is president and founder of McLeod Associates, Inc., an information technology consulting firm, and previously was a Systems Engineer with IBM. She is also vice president for operations of Aisha & Co. LLC, a family gift company whose signature product is IShababies®, a line of multicultural plush dolls. Her extensive service in the volunteer arena includes chair of the board of The Mary and Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community in Bridgeport, CT, and founding member/secretary of TEAM Westport, CT, the town diversity council whose mission is to achieve and celebrate a more welcoming, multicultural community. McLeod Bailey is an alumna (A.B. Economics) and trustee emerita of Brown University from which she received an honorary doctorate in 2023 for years of dedicated alumni service.

**Harold Bailey, Jr.** is executive vice president of McLeod Associates, Inc. He has an extensive background in information technology general management, sales, marketing, and consulting which spans hardware, software, and services. Prior to his retirement as vice president of Lotus Marketing Integration, he was on the leading edge of IBM’s transition from hardware centrality into the software and services businesses. He has since served as executive and consultant in a number of I/T ventures. Bailey received AB and ScB degrees, and an Honorary Doctorate from Brown University. He has been chair of T.E.A.M. Westport, the Town of Westport, CT’s council on diversity, since its inception in 2003. He is a member of the board of Westport Country Playhouse and served as its vice president from 2004-2006.

**Cy Coleman’s** winning streak as a Broadway composer began when he teamed with Carolyn Leigh on the musical “Wildcat” (1960), followed by “Little Me.” Coleman collaborated with Dorothy Fields on “Sweet Charity” (1965) and “Seesaw” (1973). He composed the score for “I Love My Wife” (1977) with lyrics by Michael Stewart, and “On the Twentieth Century” (1978) with Betty Comden and Adolph Green. In 1980, Coleman served as producer and composer for the circus-themed “Barnum,” with Michael Stewart’s lyrics, and collaborated on “City of Angels” (1989) with David Zippel. The 1990s brought two more of Coleman’s musicals to Broadway: “The Will Rogers Follies” (1991), again with Comden and Green, and “The Life” (1997) with lyricist Ira Gasman. Coleman’s career in popular music included “Witchcraft” for Frank Sinatra and “The Best Is Yet to Come,” originally for Tony Bennett. Coleman has received numerous honors, including three Grammy Awards, three Tony Awards, the Richard Rodgers Award for Lifetime Achievement in American Musical Theatre (ASCAP), and induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

“The Best Is Yet to Come” fundraising event is produced by **Kevin Duncan**.

Tickets for prime seating at the performance and post-show reception are \$1,000; performance-only tickets are \$300 and \$500. A portion of ticket prices is tax deductible. Tickets may be reserved by contacting Catherine MacKay, Playhouse development and special events manager, at [cmackay@westportplayhouse.org](mailto:cmackay@westportplayhouse.org) or 203-571-1291; the Playhouse box office at 203-227-4177; or online at <https://tickets.westportplayhouse.org/6581>

All proceeds from this event will support Westport Country Playhouse, a non-profit performing arts center and professional, producing theater, its work on stage and throughout the community.

More information at: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/gala2024/>

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2024 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.

A 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 Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit [westportplayhouse.org](http://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](https://www.instagram.com/wcplayhouse)), and YouTube ([WestportPlayhouse](https://www.youtube.com/WestportPlayhouse)). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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