

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Blaufuss, Public Relations Manager
(203) 227-5137 x197 | (203) 571-1287 | pblaufuss@westportplayhouse.org
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 3, 2024

Westport Country Playhouse Stages Family-Friendly Holiday Show, “A Sherlock Carol,” December 17 – 22

Playwright and director Mark Shanahan combines two classic tales into one holiday-themed mystery for all ages.

Westport Country Playhouse will stage “A Sherlock Carol,” a family-friendly holiday production based on two classic tales, “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle,” a classic Sherlock Holmes story, and “A Christmas Carol,” from Tuesday, December 17 through Sunday, December 22. The inventive plot of intrigue and suspense, infused with holiday cheer and music, features familiar characters from the literature of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Dickens. The play returns to the Playhouse by popular demand after a run last year.

Nominated for a 2022 Off-Broadway Alliance Award for Best New Play and selected as a “Critics’ Pick” by *The New York Times*, the play is written and directed by Mark Shanahan, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director.

“‘A Sherlock Carol’ turns the tables on Dickens and Doyle’s characters, revisiting them in ways audiences have not seen before,” said Shanahan. “At its heart, ‘A Sherlock Carol’ is a tale of the resurrection of the spirit, in which Sherlock Holmes, in a fit of despair, struggles his way back from a dark place. He is guided by the spirit of Ebenezer Scrooge, who charges Holmes with becoming his best self and living up to his famed talents as the world’s foremost consulting detective.”

The play is set in 1894 London on Christmas Eve as a grown-up Tiny Tim asks Sherlock Holmes to investigate the peculiar death of Ebenezer Scrooge.

“‘A Sherlock Carol’ is a perfect show for young theatregoers and we hope it will invite them into a lifelong love affair with the theatre,” stated Shanahan. “It aims to be a smart, sophisticated, and warm-hearted comedy to share with a child or grandchild.

“Our six actors play multiple roles, creating theatre magic with the flip of a hat or a quick costume change in the wings, entering and exiting as different characters in a matter of moments,” Shanahan added.

The entire cast will reprise their roles from last year’s Playhouse production. Cast members are **Drew McVety** as Sherlock Holmes (Westport Country Playhouse: virtual playreading of “A Sherlock Carol,” Script in Hand playreading of “The Scream”; Broadway: “Bandstand,” “The Front Page,” “The Last Ship,” “Cyrano de Bergerac,” “Billy Elliot,” “Sunday in the Park with George,” “Spamalot,” “Frozen,” “Big River” – Special Tony Award, “Titanic,” “The Heidi Chronicles”; Off-Broadway: “A Sherlock Carol,” Drama Desk nomination for “Corpus Christi”); **Byron St. Cyr** as Ebenezer Scrooge (theatre artist, writer, musician; Off-Broadway: “A Sherlock Carol”; regional theater: “Beautiful: The Carole King Musical,” “Dames at Sea,” “Billy Elliot”; national tours: “Miss Saigon,” “My Fair Lady”; byronstcyr.com or @BSCjr on Instagram); **Joe Delafield** (Westport

-more-

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE T (203) 227-5137 | BOX OFFICE T (203) 227-4177
westportplayhouse.org

Country Playhouse: "The 39 Steps," "The School for Husbands," Radio Theater's "A Merry Little Christmas Carol," Script in Hand playreadings of "Christmas at Pemberley," "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd"; Broadway: "Tartuffe"; Off-Broadway: "Fashions for Men," "Outward Bound"; television: "The Sopranos"; MFA from NYU's Graduate Acting Program).

Dan Domingues as Dr. Timothy Cratchit, Mr. Topper, Ralph Fezziwig, and Constable Hopkins (Westport Country Playhouse: virtual playreading of "A Sherlock Carol"; Off-Broadway: "The Tempest," "Fidelis"; film: "Run All Night"; MFA from A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard; creator and co-host of "Hot Date," a podcast for movie fans); **Isabel Keating** as The Countess of Morcar, Martha Cratchit, Mary Morstan, Abigail Fezziwig, Caroler, and Woman in Restaurant (Westport Country Playhouse: virtual playreading of "A Sherlock Carol," Script in Hand playreading of "Mrs. Christie," "Agatha Christie's The Murder of Roger Ackroyd"; Broadway: "Doubt: A Parable," "Wicked," "It's Only a Play," "Hairspray," "Spider-Man," "Enchanted April," "The Boy from Oz" - Tony Award nomination, Drama Desk and Theatre World awards; Off-Broadway: "A Sherlock Carol"; television: Emmy Award-winning PBS American Masters "Judy Garland: By Myself"); and **Sharone Sayegh** as Emma Wiggins, Fan Gardner, Inspector Lestrade, and Mrs. Windigate (Westport Country Playhouse: "The 39 Steps," Script in Hand playreadings of "Mrs. Christie," "As Bees in Honey Drown," "Agatha Christie's The Murder of Roger Ackroyd," "Letters to Our Daughters"; Broadway: "Come From Away," "The Band's Visit," "Mamma Mia!"; co-writer of new musical "The Game Boy"; Syracuse University alum; sharonesayegh.com).

Playwright and director **Mark Shanahan** is Playhouse artistic director and Script in Hand curator. He recently directed "The 39 Steps," the Playhouse's inaugural production for the 2024-25 season. He also directed his own adaptation of "Agatha Christie's The Murder of Roger Ackroyd," in partnership with Agatha Christie Ltd., which premiered 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, Shanahan has appeared on and Off-Broadway ("The 39 Steps," "Tryst," "The Shaugraun," and others) and at many celebrated regional theatres. Shanahan has appeared on the Westport Country Playhouse stage in "Journey's End" (2005), "David Copperfield," directed by Joanne Woodward and Annie Keefe, (2005), "Sedition" (2007), "Tryst" (2008), and "Around the World in 80 Days" (2009), and numerous Script In Hand readings. 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. mark-shanahan.net.

The creative team includes **James J. Fenton**, set design; **Linda Cho**, costume design; **Alyssandra Docherty**, lighting design; and **John Gromada**, music and sound design. Production stage manager is **Becky Fleming**. Assistant stage manager is **Amadi Cary**. **Anissa Felix** of the original Off-Broadway cast will serve as assistant director as recipient of a Playhouse directing fellowship. Props are loaned by the original production designed by **Anna Louizos**. Additional support provided by **Fat Goose Productions** and **TheatreNerd Productions**.

As a child, Shanahan became hooked on Sherlock Holmes stories. "I was that kid reading 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' under the covers with a flashlight," he said. "I really devoured those stories, and they stayed with me." As an actor, Shanahan performed in a production of "Sherlock Holmes and The West End Horror," and as a director, he helmed numerous Sherlock Holmes plays on stages across the country, from serious takes to spoofs on the character.

"With all that in mind, eventually it came time for me to gin up a little bravery and try my own hand at writing a Sherlock Holmes story for the stage," Shanahan noted. "Dickens and Doyle were essentially my inspiration and my collaborators - the angels on my shoulders. I'm only borrowing the characters that they invented

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE T (203) 227-5137 | BOX OFFICE T (203) 227-4177
westportplayhouse.org

through their genius, playing with them to create a fun, uplifting, new tale that stays true to the spirit of both of the authors' original works."

Performance schedule is Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday at 2 and 7 p.m.; and Sunday at 2 p.m. The play is recommended for age 7 and up. Running time is 108 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

Single tickets start at \$35 and are subject to change based upon availability. Student tickets are \$20. For information on special offers, as well as options for pay-what-you-will and library passes, visit www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/box-office/.

Pre- and post-show offerings include Opening Night on Tuesday, December 17, featuring a post-show reception with cast, crew, and creative team, following the 7 p.m. show; Together at the Table, on Wednesday, December 18, at 5:30 p.m., offering a pizza dinner to families or groups with student-age children; and Pride Night, on Thursday, December 19, at 6 p.m., featuring a cocktail party for the LGBTQ+ community and friends, with a limited open bar from Trevi Lounge and appetizers from Walrus Alley.

During the run of "A Sherlock Carol," the Playhouse will be giving back to the community, benefiting individuals and families served by the Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Norwalk Toys for Tots, and Homes with Hope. Donations may be dropped off in the collection boxes located in the Playhouse lobby during box office hours, Tues. through Fri., 12 to 5 p.m.

"A Sherlock Carol" Production Partner is Claire Wilkes; Corporate Partner is RBC Wealth Management. Production Patron is Laura Z. Barket; Corporate Production Patron is Westfair TV Audio. Opening Night Sponsor is RDM Financial Group at Hightower; Together at the Table Sponsors are Paige and Jodi Couture, with generous support from Westport Rotary.

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.

For "A Sherlock Carol" information and tickets, visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/a-sherlock-carol/>

A complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at westportplayhouse.org. All play titles, artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

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](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.

###

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE T (203) 227-5137 | BOX OFFICE T (203) 227-4177
westportplayhouse.org