

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand Playreading of New Romantic Comedy, “BackTalk,” on Monday, February 3

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of a new romantic comedy, “BackTalk,” about first dates and second thoughts, on Monday, February 3, at 7 p.m. The play is written by Rob Ackerman and directed by Jeremy Webb.

“With Valentine’s Day just around the corner, I’m thrilled to introduce ‘BackTalk,’ a brand-new work by celebrated playwright Rob Ackerman, as part of our Script in Hand reading series,” said Mark Shanahan, Script in Hand curator and Playhouse artistic director. “Set against the backdrop of modern dating, ‘BackTalk’ is a witty and warm exploration of what happens when love makes you question everything—about yourself, your past, and your future.

“With sharp dialogue, laugh-out-loud moments, and plenty of heart, Rob’s play offers a witty and tender look at what it takes to quiet the noise and take a leap of faith when it comes to love. Director Jeremy Webb has assembled a truly perfect cast to deliver such a warm, romantic comedy on a chilly night in February at the Playhouse. What could be more fun?”

“BackTalk” dives into the hilariously complicated world of first impressions, second chances, and the voices in our heads that just won’t let us be. When Rachel, an ambitious real estate developer, starts falling for Bob, a laid-back plumber, their chemistry is undeniable. As their budding romance unfolds, Rachel and Bob must navigate their insecurities, expectations, and the unfiltered commentary which constantly runs through their minds.

The cast, in alphabetical order, includes **Kathy Fitzgerald** as Mindy, Bob’s inner voice (Broadway: “Wicked,” “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” “The Producers,” “Swinging on a Star” - Drama Desk nomination, “9 to 5” - OCC nomination; Off-Broadway: “Damn Yankees,” “Disaster!,” “Donnybrook”; TV/Film: “Smash,” “Mercy,” “One Life to Live,” “Curb Your Enthusiasm,” “The Next Three Days,” “Our Idiot Brother,” “The Producers”); **Francis Jue** as Herman, Rachel’s inner voice (Broadway: “Yellow Face,” after earning Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards for the NYC debut of “Yellow Face” at the Public Theater; Other Broadway: “Pacific Overtures,” “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” “M. Butterfly”; Recent theatre: “Cambodian Rock Band” - Lortel Award, “Soft Power - Outer Critics Circle Award); **Sharaé Moultrie** as Rachel (actor, singer, commercial model; favorite roles include Marianne Laine in “Girl From the North Country,” First National Tour; Deena Jones in “Dreamgirls,” International Tour; Ariel in “Footloose,” Nettie in “The Color Purple,” Rizzo in “Grease”; TV: “Blue Bloods,” “FBI: Most Wanted.” [www.iamsharae.com](http://www.iamsharae.com)); **David T. Patterson** as Bob (Broadway: “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,” “Les Liaisons Dangereuses”; Off-Broadway: “Picnic,” “Come Back Little Sheba”; Regional: “The Da Vinci Code,” “Clyde’s,” “Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors”; TV: “Only Murders in The Building,” “The Gilded Age”; Graduate of Carnegie Mellon University); and **Ariela S. Nazar-Rosen** reading stage directions (Edinburgh Festival Fringe: Created and performed a solo show, “make the Bed” - five-star review from *The Scotsman*, and shortlisted for Mental

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25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880  
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Health Foundation Fringe Award; "The Liar," "Measure for Measure"; MFA Acting: The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; arielanazarrosen.com)

Playwright **Rob Ackerman's** work includes the 2024 movie "Stargazer" (AppleTV+, Prime Video); the play and film "Origin of the Species" (Netflix); "Loyalty" (NYTF); "Dropping Gumballs on Luke Wilson" (Off-Broadway, ART/NY, directed by Theresa Rebeck); "Teach for America" (ACT, San Francisco); "Volleygirls" (NYMF, Best in Fest); "Call Me Waldo" (Off-Broadway, Working Theater); "Tabletop" (American Place Theater, Drama Desk Winner, Best Ensemble); "Icarus of Ohio" (NYU, Tisch); "Disconnect" (CSC). For 25 years, Ackerman worked as prop master for the SNL Film Unit. Middlebury B.A.; Northwestern M.F.A. He is a member of Dramatists Guild of America, Inc.

Director **Jeremy Webb** appeared as Aucassin in "Nicolette and Aucassin" at Westport Country Playhouse in 2000. He created "Broadway Dreams" for The Kurt Weill Festival (Dessau, Germany), and directed "The Soldier's Tale" and "Camelot" (Gulf Coast Symphony); "Rabbit Hole" (Actor's Workshop); "The Secret Garden" (South Carolina Festival of Flowers), "I Carry Your Heart" (Premiere). As an actor, Broadway: "Take Me Out," "Burn This"; National Tour: "Girl from the North Country"; Off Broadway: "The Glorious Ones" (Lincoln Center Theater, original cast recording), Rob Ackerman's "Tabletop" (Drama Desk Award), "Help" (Shed), "Baltimore Waltz" (Signature Theatre).

Tickets are \$30. Running time is 90 minutes; no intermission. Age recommendation is 14 and up.

For full details, visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/script-in-hand-backtalk/>

The Script in Hand Playreading Series is supported by Joyce Hergenhan and the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation. 2025 Programming and Season Sponsor is Barbara Streicker. Media sponsors are Mofly Media and WSHU Public Radio. Westport Country Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

The upcoming Script in Hand playreading season is scheduled on Mondays at 7 p.m. in 2025 as follows: Apr. 14, May 5, June 9, Sept. 8, Nov. 3, and Dec. 1; titles to be announced.

Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors use their skills to catapult the audience's imagination without benefit of scenery or costumes. For a video on Script in Hand, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2eWDaF-JXA>

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), and YouTube (WestportPlayhouse). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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