

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Blaufuss, Public Relations Manager
(203) 227-5137 x197 | (203) 571-1287 | pblaufuss@westportplayhouse.org
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Westport Country Playhouse Presents Sunday Symposium on “Theatre Adaptations”

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Sunday Symposium on “Theatre Adaptations,” about plays which are adaptations of previous source materials and the path to an adaptation’s success, on Sunday, March 30, following the 3 p.m. performance of the romantic comedy, “Theatre People,” written by Connecticut native Paul Slade Smith, adapted from Ferenc Molnár’s “Play at the Castle,” and directed by Mark Shanahan, Playhouse artistic director.

“I’m absolutely delighted to host our Sunday Symposium on a wonderfully fun and fitting topic following our Sunday matinee performance of ‘Theatre People,’” said Shanahan. “This entertaining and energetic comedy is a fresh adaptation of Ferenc Molnár’s classic, and has been given a new setting, a new sensibility, and a vibrant new lease on life in Paul Slade Smith’s brilliant new take. The Symposium promises to be an engaging, entertaining, and insightful conversation—a joyful exploration of how a play’s life can continue to evolve, surprise, and find new meaning with each fresh interpretation.”

Sunday Symposium guests will be Erin Noel Grennan, “Theatre People” cast member, and Paul Walsh, Yale University theatre professor and historian. Moderator will be Anne Keefe, former Playhouse co-artistic director and Script in Hand curator, as well as a current Playhouse trustee.

Grennan will speak to adapting a classic into a new iteration. The wife of the playwright of “Theatre People,” Grennan has been a part of the adaptation since its start, with the role of Olga written especially for her. Walsh will talk about the adaptation process, highlighting some of the most successful adaptations in history, as well as offering insights into the process of reinventing classic works for contemporary audiences.

The Symposium will begin at approximately 5 p.m., following the 3 p.m. matinee performance of “Theatre People.” The Playhouse Sunday Symposium program is free and open to the public. The discussion will be followed by an interactive dialogue with the audience.

“Theatre People” takes the audience back to 1948 as the brightest names on Broadway descend upon a glamorous Newport mansion for a weekend of romance, chaos, and more than a few misunderstandings. The cast of characters is populated by a pair of scheming playwrights, a couple of misbehaving actors, a star-struck young author, and a disgruntled housekeeper. The play conjures the spirit of the classic screwball comedies of yesteryear with irresistible charm and backstage antics.

Playing March 25 through April 12, “Theatre People” is the final production in the Playhouse’s 2024-25 “Season of Laughter,” a slate of five shows from October through April, chosen specifically to energize the community with a welcoming sense of warmth, humor, and joy.

The Sunday Symposium Series is supported, in part, by the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation. “Theatre People” Production Supporter is Cherie Flom Quain. Corporate Supporter is The

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Shoreline Wealth Management Group at Morgan Stanley. 2025 Opening Night Post-Show Reception Sponsor is RDM Financial Group at Hightower. 2025 Together at the Table Sponsors are Paige and Jodi Couture, with generous support from Westport Rotary. 2025 Programming and Season Sponsor is Barbara Streicker. 2025 Media sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio.

For full details on "Theatre People," visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/theatre-people/>

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

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