

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand Playreading of “Satchel Paige and The Kansas City Swing” on Monday, September 9

#### Westport’s Trey Ellis is co-writer and director of drama about the pitching legend during final days of baseball’s Negro Leagues.

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of “Satchel Paige and The Kansas City Swing,” a jazz-infused drama about the famous pitcher during the last days of baseball’s Negro Leagues in the late 1940s, written by Trey Ellis and Ricardo Khan, and directed by Ellis, on Monday, September 9, at 7 p.m. Ellis is a resident of Westport, Connecticut.

“With beautifully drawn characters and evocative storytelling, this extraordinary play by Westport author Trey Ellis and co-author Ricardo Khan expertly recounts a pivotal moment in history,” said Mark Shanahan, Playhouse artistic director and Script in Hand series curator. “Blending humor, heartbreak, and historical depth, ‘Satchel Paige and the Kansas City Swing’ vividly brings to life the story a baseball legend and the era in which he lived. I can’t wait for our incredible cast to ‘take the field’ on the Playhouse stage and share this compelling and important story with our audience.”

It’s 1947, and Satchel Paige is the king of baseball: a charismatic, superstar pitcher and a legend in the Negro Leagues. But as Jackie Robinson embarks upon his historic first season in the majors, Paige finds his own fame eclipsed and his desire for greater respect increasingly frustrated by the barriers he faces all around him. Set in Kansas City during a barnstorming tour, this jazz-infused tale of one of the greatest baseball players of all time paints a vivid picture of America on the brink of change, capturing the struggle for equality on and off the field. “Satchel Paige and the Kansas City Swing” tells a powerful story of resilience and transformation, highlighting a defining moment in the nation’s history.

Playwright and director **Trey Ellis** is a two-time Emmy and Peabody-winning filmmaker, American Book Award-winning novelist, NAACP Image Award-winning playwright, essayist, and Professor of Professional Practice at Columbia University’s School of the Arts. His play, “Fly,” was commissioned by the Lincoln Center Institute and continues to be performed around the country, including Washington, D.C.’s Ford’s Theater, Pasadena Playhouse, and New Victory Theater in New York. Some of his screenplays include the Peabody Award-winning “The Tuskegee Airmen” for HBO and “Good Fences” for Showtime, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was shortlisted for the PEN Award for Best Teleplay. His works have been screened at the Museum of Modern Art and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He is the author of the novels, “Platitudes,” “Home Repairs,” and “Right Here, Right Now,” as well as the memoir “Bedtime Stories: Adventures in the Land of Single-Fatherhood.” Most recently, he is a writer and consulting producer on “Costiera,” a comedy/action series set on the Amalfi Coast for Amazon and starring Jesse Williams.

Playwright **Ricardo Khan** is a director, writer, educator, and Tony Award-winning artistic director. He co-founded Crossroads Theatre Company, one of history’s few African American theatres to ever rise to both

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national and international prominence as a major professional arts institution. He was also associate producer for a number of Crossroads productions at the New York Public Theatre for the late Joseph Papp, and in 2005, with co-producer Woodie King, Jr., presented the Broadway tribute to August Wilson in the New York theatre that now bares Mr. Wilson's name. Khan's major directing credits include Crossroads, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Hartford Stage, Market Theatre in South Africa, Ford's Theatre, Negro Ensemble Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Cincinnati Playhouse, Florida Studio Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and Apollo Theatre in Harlem. As a writer, he co-wrote the NAACP Award-winning "Fly" with Trey Ellis about the esteemed Tuskegee Airmen of World War II, "Freedom Rider," and "When Day Comes."

The 10-member cast will be announced soon.

Tickets are \$30. The play is appropriate for ages 13 and up.

For full details on the Script in Hand playreading of "Satchel Paige and The Kansas City Swing," visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/script-in-hand-september-2/>

The Script in Hand Playreading Series is supported by Joyce Hergenhan and the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation. 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.

More Script in Hand playreadings are scheduled on Mondays at 7 p.m. on October 7, and December 2; titles to be announced. Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors bring the words to life without sets 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](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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