

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Broadway Method Academy Named Resident Conservatory of Westport Country Playhouse**

Westport Country Playhouse (WCP) announces that Broadway Method Academy (BMA) of Fairfield will be Resident Conservatory of WCP, presenting a series of programs on the Playhouse campus.

“Broadway Method Academy is clearly one of the leading theatrical training grounds in Connecticut, bringing young people together with professionals of the highest caliber,” said Michael Barker, Westport Country Playhouse managing director. “Our new partnership with BMA builds on the Playhouse’s mission-level commitment to arts education, alongside the Woodward Internship program, teaching artist residencies, Family Festivities programming, and student matinee series. We are thrilled to welcome BMA as the Westport Country Playhouse’s Resident Conservatory.”

BMA provides comprehensive training for young people in musical theater, including acting, singing, and dancing, bringing in Broadway professionals to work with students. The non-profit organization, founded in 2014, offers at its Unquowa Road studio in Fairfield a variety of classes, private coaching sessions, and performance opportunities.

“Westport Country Playhouse is a staple of our community with a monumental history and bright future,” said Connor Deane, BMA co-founder and executive director. “We are thrilled to form a partnership with this impressive organization and believe that we will be able to further our mission of connecting the stars of today with the stars of tomorrow.”

Deane, a Connecticut native, is a graduate of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music with a degree in Musical Theatre. In addition to experience in stage performance and direction, Deane has taught extensively throughout the country. J. Scott Handley, BMA co-founder and executive director, is a graduate of Florida State University with a bachelor’s degree in Music. Handley was the executive director of CAST Voice Studio, and currently serves as department chair of musical theatre at Regional Center for the Arts in Trumbull.

As Resident Conservatory of WCP, BMA will present on the Playhouse campus four programs: Tech Talks, Broadway Sings, a Mainstage Production, and a Spring Masterclass.

Tech Talks, Friday through Sunday, July 7, 8, and 9, will offer a three-day program for BMA students to explore the technical world of theater with professional Broadway designers through seminars, panel discussions, and activities, during preparation for the Playhouse production of “Grounded”.

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Broadway Sings, Monday, November 27, is a gala fundraiser presenting BMA students alongside Broadway talents in a performance on the Playhouse stage. In past years, company members from “Hamilton,” “Wicked,” “The Lion King,” and “Beautiful” have participated in the one-night-only event.

The Mainstage Production, January 28 through February 11, will be “Evita,” featuring professional actors who will team up with BMA students for the Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice musical on the Playhouse stage. The instructor and topic for the Spring Masterclass, March 19 – 25, will be announced at a later date.

Deane added, “By combining Westport’s expertise in producing world-class theatrical entertainment, with BMA’s vision of linking young artists with working professionals, we can define exciting new opportunities for the thriving artistic community. We look forward to collaborating with the Playhouse to bring more comprehensive musical theater training opportunities, a variety of top-notch masterclasses, and a mainstage production season that will surely thrill audiences.”

For more information on BMA programs as Resident Conservatory of WCP, visit [www.broadwaymethodacademy.com](http://www.broadwaymethodacademy.com), [www.westportplayhouse.org](http://www.westportplayhouse.org), or call 203- 675-3526. Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. Stay connected to the Playhouse and BMA on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse) (Broadway Method Academy), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse) (@bmafairfield), and Instagram (@WCPlayhouse) (@broadwaymethodacademy), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

### **About Westport Country Playhouse**

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced *theater worth talking about* and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The Playhouse creates this relationship with the community and provides this experience in multiple ways by offering: Live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos, from May to November; educational and community engagement events and opportunities to further explore issues presented by the work on stage; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; *Script in Hand* playreadings throughout the year to deepen relationships with audiences and artists alike; the renowned Woodward Internship Program training program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; *Family Festivities* presentations from December through April to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. The value of the Westport Country Playhouse to all it touches is immeasurable.

### **About Broadway Method Academy**

Broadway Method Academy is a non-profit organization that offers a premier Musical Theatre training program and provides the essential tools for young artists in acting, singing, and dancing. BMA also connects children and teens that are passionate about the arts with some of Broadway’s top talents and guest instructors. BMA’s goal is to create a thriving artistic atmosphere where students can create lasting friendships and develop skills they will use forever.

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