

MEDIA ALERT



Goodspeed to Honor Two-Time Tony Award-Winning Star **CHITA RIVERA**

*On July 11, 2016, the incomparable star of **Bye Bye Birdie**, **West Side Story**, **Chicago**, **The Rink**, **Kiss of the Spider Woman**, **The Visit** and many others will be presented with
The Goodspeed Award for Outstanding Contribution to Musical Theatre*

Goodspeed Musicals is thrilled to announce that legendary performer **Chita Rivera** will be the latest recipient of *The Goodspeed Award for Outstanding Contribution to Musical Theatre*. Ms. Rivera has made her mark as a singer, dancer, consummate performer and Broadway legend. This Broadway gypsy-turned-star has won Drama Desk, Outer Critics, and Helen Hayes Awards as well as earning the distinction of being first Hispanic woman to receive the Kennedy Center Honor.

Chita Rivera will be honored on July 11, 2016 when Broadway luminaries and arts sustainers gather for a razzle dazzling event to support the development of New Works and emerging artists in Musical Theatre. Ms. Rivera shared, “Goodspeed is a national treasure. Their continuing innovative work in musical theatre is to be applauded.”

A much-anticipated annual event saluting the best in musical theatre, Goodspeed’s Gala has become the place to be each summer. This unforgettable evening will include cocktails, dinner and special entertainment at **Priam Vineyard**, 11 Shailor Hill Road, Colchester, Conn.

Goodspeed’s Executive Director Michael Gennaro stated that “Goodspeed is truly honored to present this award to Chita Rivera. Chita is an extraordinary artist and performer and one of the most celebrated dancers ever to grace the Broadway stage. This is the perfect year to celebrate Chita’s legendary career as we are producing two shows in which she starred – **Anything Goes** as Reno Sweeney and **Bye Bye Birdie** where she originated the role of Rosie Alvarez.”

This year’s honorary committee includes **Lee Adams; Graciela Daniele; Maurice Hines, Jr.; John Kander; David Krane; Rob Marshall; Hal Prince; Ann Reinking** and **Charles Strouse**.

All proceeds from Goodspeed’s annual Gala support the development of New Works and emerging artists in Musical Theatre. Previous honorees include **Julie Andrews, Martin Charnin, Kristin Chenoweth, Ira Gershwin, Sheldon Harnick, Jerry Herman, William Ivey Long, Thomas Meehan, Michael P. Price, Gerald Schoenfeld, Stephen Schwartz, Susan Stroman, Charles Strouse, Tommy Tune, Tony Walton, and Paul Williams**.

For additional information regarding this event, please contact Mary Miko at 860-873-8664, ext. 368 or by email at mmiko@goodspeed.org

ABOUT CHITA RIVERA:

An accomplished and versatile actress/singer/dancer, Chita Rivera has won two Tony Awards as Best Leading Actress in a Musical and received eight additional Tony nominations for an exceptional 10 Tony nominations. She recently starred in *The Visit*, the final John Kander/Fred Ebb/Terrence McNally musical directed by John Doyle and choreographed by Graciela Daniele on Broadway (2015), following the acclaimed production at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in the summer of 2014. She starred in the Broadway revival of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the Broadway and touring productions of *The Dancer's Life*, a dazzling new musical celebrating her spectacular career, written by Terrence McNally and directed by Graciela Daniele and the revival of the Broadway musical *Nine* with Antonio Banderas. She trained as a ballerina (from age 11) before receiving a scholarship to the School of American Ballet from legendary George Balanchine. Chita's first appearance (age 17) was as a principal dancer in *Call Me Madam*. Her electric performance as Anita in the original Broadway premiere of *West Side Story* brought her stardom, which she repeated in London. Her career is highlighted by starring roles in *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Rink* (Tony Award), *Chicago*, *Jerry's Girls*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Tony Award), and the original Broadway casts of *Guys and Dolls*, *Can-Can*, *Seventh Heaven* and *Mr. Wonderful*. On tour: *Born Yesterday*; *The Rose Tattoo*; *Call Me Madam*; *Threepenny Opera*; *Sweet Charity*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Zorba*; and *Can-Can* with The Rockettes. Chita was awarded The Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama in 2009. She received the coveted Kennedy Center Honor in 2002 and is the first Hispanic woman ever chosen to receive this award. Last year, Great Performances aired their special *Chita Rivera: A Lot of Livin' To Do*, a retrospective on her extraordinary life and career, nationwide on PBS. Chita's current solo CD is entitled *And Now I Swing*. Her most treasured production is her daughter, singer/dancer/choreographer Lisa Mordente.

PHOTO CREDIT: Photo by Joseph Sinnott/Thirteen Productions LLC

Contact: For more information please contact Elisa Hale (ext. 323) or Dan McMahon (ext. 324) at 860.873.8664, Elisa.Hale@goodspeed.org/Dan.McMahon@goodspeed.org

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