

2018/19 SEASON

FIRST SEASON PRODUCTION

SWEAT

By Lynn Nottage
Directed by Lisa Peterson
August 29 – October 7, 2018

SECOND SEASON PRODUCTION

VALLEY OF THE HEART

Written and Directed by Luis Valdez
October 30 – December 9, 2018

THIRD SEASON PRODUCTION

LINDA VISTA

By Tracy Letts
Directed by Dexter Bullard
January 9 – February 17, 2019

FOURTH SEASON PRODUCTION

LACKAWANNA BLUES

Written, Directed, and Performed
by Ruben Santiago-Hudson
Music Composed and Performed
by Bill Sims Jr.
March 5 – April 21, 2019

FIFTH SEASON PRODUCTION

HAPPY DAYS

By Samuel Beckett
Directed by James Bundy
With Dianne Wiest
May 15 – June 30, 2019



Ian Barford. Photo by Saviero Truglia.

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MICHAEL RITCHIE Artistic Director | **DOUGLAS C. BAKER** Producing Director
GORDON DAVIDSON Founding Artistic Director

Presents

Steppenwolf Theatre's production of

Linda Vista

By

Tracy Letts

With

Ian Barford
Chantal Thuy

Tim Hopper
Cora Vander Broek

Sally Murphy
Troy West

Caroline Neff

Scenic Design

Todd Rosenthal

Costume Design

Laura Bauer

Lighting Design

Marcus Doshi

Sound Design

Richard Woodbury

Dramaturg

Edward Sobel

Casting

JC Clementz

Associate Producer

Lindsay Allbaugh

Production Stage Manager

David S. Franklin

Directed By

Dexter Bullard

JANUARY 9 – FEBRUARY 17, 2019 **MARK TAPER FORUM**

Linda Vista was commissioned by and the World premiere presented at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, IL;
Anna D. Shapiro, Artistic Director and David Schmitz, Executive Director.

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

Wheeler IAN BARFORD
Paul TIM HOPPER
Michael TROY WEST
Anita CAROLINE NEFF
Minnie CHANTAL THUY
Margaret SALLY MURPHY
Jules CORA VANDER BROEK

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for a listed performer unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance.

Wheeler ELIJAH ALEXANDER
Anita, Jules HANNAH TAMMINEN
Paul, Michael ROBERT MAFFIA
Margaret ELAINE RIVKIN
Minnie VIRGINIA TRAN

STAGE MANAGERS

Michelle Blair (L.A.)
Jaclynn Joslin (Chicago)

PLACE

Various locations in San Diego

INTERMISSION

Linda Vista will be performed with one intermission.

Please turn off all electronic devices such as cellular phones and watch alarms. The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, with or without flash, is strictly prohibited.

WHO'S WHO



IAN BARFORD (*Wheeler*) has originated four roles in plays by Tracy Letts: Little Charles in the Pulitzer Prize and Tony-winning *August: Osage County* (Broadway and London's National Theatre), Ray in *Mary Page Marlowe*, Mr. Carp in *The Minutes*, and Wheeler in *Linda Vista*.

Broadway credits also include Ed (the father) in the Tony-winning play *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and Billy in *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*. On stages in Los Angeles, he has appeared in *Dead End* at the Ahmanson and *The Weir, Take Me Out*, and *God's Man in Texas* at the Geffen. Ensemble member at Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. Some favorite productions there include *The Libertine*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Betrayal*, *Endgame*, *Detroit*, and many others. Numerous TV appearances. Film: *Road to Perdition*, *13 Going on 30*, *Catch Hell*, *The Last Rites of Joe May*, and others.



TIM HOPPER (*Paul*) is a member of the Steppenwolf ensemble. Credits there include Bruce Norris' *Downstate*, which will travel to the National Theatre in London in March 2019. Television credits include *The Americans*, *Empire*, *The Exorcist*, and *Chicago Fire*, among others.

Film credits include the upcoming *Knives and Skin*, as well as *An Acceptable Loss*, *School of Rock*, and *To Die For*, among others. 2018 Ten Chimneys Fellow.



SALLY MURPHY (*Margaret*) is a longtime member of the Steppenwolf ensemble, where she originated roles in Tracy Letts' *August: Osage County* (also Broadway, London's National Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company) and *The Minutes*. Sally was most recently seen in Lincoln Center Theater's acclaimed production of Joshua

Harmon's *Admissions* and starred in the 20th season premiere of *Law & Order: SVU*. Other recent credits include Richard Nelson's *The Apple Family Plays* at The Public Theater, David Rabe's *Visiting Edna* at Steppenwolf, Martha Clarke and Alfred Uhry's *Angel Reapers* at Signature Theatre, and Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* at Atlantic Theater Company. On Broadway, she played Julie Jordan in Lincoln Center Theater's *Carousel*, Rose of Sharon in Steppenwolf's *The Grapes of Wrath* (also London's National Theatre), Tzeitel in *Fiddler on the Roof*, and the role of Sally in Michael John LaChiusa's *The Wild Party*. Film credits include *Scent*

of a Woman, *Pollock*, and *Fearless*. TV credits include *The Good Wife*, HBO's *If These Walls Could Talk*, and PBS' *Great Performances* and *American Playhouse*.



CAROLINE NEFF (*Anita*) is a Steppenwolf ensemble member, where she was last seen in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *You Got Older*, *Linda Vista*, *The Fundamentals*, *The Flick*, *Airline Highway* (including the Broadway production at Manhattan Theatre Club), *The Way West*, *Three Sisters*, *Annie Bosh*

is Missing, and *Where We're Born*. Select Chicago credits include *Lettie* (Victory Gardens—Jeff Award, Best Actor); *Uncle Vanya* (Goodman Theatre); *A Brief History of Helen of Troy* (Jeff Award, Best Actress); *The Knowledge*, *Harper Regan*, *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings* (Steep Theatre); *The Downpour* (Route 66 Theatre); *Port* (Griffin Theatre); *4000 Miles* (Northlight Theatre); and *Moonshiner* (Jackalope Theatre). Regional credits include *Peerless* (Yale Repertory Theatre). Film and television credits include a recurring role on the upcoming CBS show *Red Line*, *Chicago P.D.*, *Chicago Fire*, *Open Tables*, and *Older Children*. She is also a proud company member of Steep Theatre and holds her BA from Columbia College Chicago.



CHANTAL THUY (*Minnie*) is thrilled to be making her Center Theatre Group debut in *Linda Vista* at the Mark Taper Forum. Born and raised in Montreal, her parents originally fled the Vietnam War by boat and eventually came to Quebec. She is fluent in English, French, and Vietnamese.

Theatre: *The Lady Was a Gentleman* (Broads' Word Ensemble); *We Are* (Pan Asian Repertory Theater); *The Seagull*, *Winter's Tale* (Stella Adler/Harold Clurman Lab Theatre); and reading series with the Ma-Yi Lab Theatre, African American Playwrights Exchange, and Teesri Duniya Theatre. Film and television: Chantal currently portrays the DC Comics character Grace Choi on the television series *Black Lightning* (The CW & Netflix worldwide). Additional television and film credits include *Madam Secretary* (CBS), *Pretty Little Liars* (Freeform), and *Matador* (El Rey Network). Education: Proud graduate of the Stella Adler Studio in New York City. Thank you to my family, friends, and loved ones for their unconditional love and support. I also owe my deepest gratitude to all my teachers and mentors who made me fall in love with the theatre. It is the greatest honor and privilege to be

working with Center Theatre Group, Tracy, Dexter, and the Steppenwolf Theatre ensemble. Cyber stalking here—Instagram: ChantalThuy, Twitter: @Chantal_Thuy



CORA VANDER BROEK (*Jules*) is thrilled to reprise the role of Jules in *Linda Vista* at the Mark Taper Forum after originating the role at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Cora recently appeared in the Chicago premiere of Rebecca Gilman's *Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976* at Goodman Theatre. Other selected Chicago credits

include *The Mousetrap* and *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* (Northlight Theatre); *Hank Williams: Lost Highway* (American Blues Theater); *Luck of the Irish* and *Madagascar* (Next Theatre); *All My Sons* (TimeLine Theatre); *Dead End* (Jeff Award nomination for Best Actress in a Supporting Role) at Griffin Theatre; *Book of Days* (After Dark Award for Actress in a Principal Role). Regional credits include *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* (Actors Theatre of Louisville and Milwaukee Repertory); *Doubt* and *A Christmas Carol* (Indiana Repertory Theatre). Film and television credits include *Chicago Fire*, *Where We Started*, *Of Minor Prophets*, and *Blur Circle*. Based in Los Angeles, Cora is represented by Justice & Ponder.



TROY WEST (*Michael*) originated the role of Sheriff Deon Gilbeau in the original Broadway, London, and Sydney productions of *August: Osage County*. Other credits include Schmendiman in the original production of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, which enjoyed a long run at the Westwood Playhouse—now Geffen

Playhouse—and the Off-Broadway run of Mr. Letts' *Bug* at the Barrow Street Theatre. Based in Chicago, where his credits include the Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass, A Red Orchid Theatre, and the old Remains Theatre, among others. Regionally, he has worked at ACT, Arden, Indiana Rep, and Theatre By The Sea. Troy will be seen in the upcoming independent film *Dreaming Grand Avenue*, as Walt Whitman.

ELIJAH ALEXANDER (*Understudy for Wheeler*). South Coast Repertory: *Shrew (Petruccio)*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Theseus/Oberon). Broadway: *Metamorphoses*. Off-Broadway: *Shopping and Fucking* (New York Theatre Workshop). BAM: *Throne of Blood*. Royal Shakespeare Company: *Tantalus*. Guthrie Theater/Berkeley Repertory



Theatre: *Watch on the Rhine* (Kurt Muller). Oregon Shakespeare Festival for five seasons: *Fingersmith*, *Hamlet*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Henry VIII*. Utah Shakespeare Festival for four seasons: *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, *Gaslight*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Art*. California Shakespeare Theater for three seasons: *Man and Superman*, *Restoration Comedy*, *An Ideal Husband*. Arizona Theatre Company: *Disgraced*. ACT Theatre: *The Invisible Hand* (Gregory Award). Films: *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, *Amazing Love*. TV: *Touch*, *Awake*, *JAG*, *Summerland*. Training: MFA Yale School of Drama. elijahalexander.net



HANNAH TAMMINEN (*Understudy for Anita, Jules*) is thrilled to return to the Mark Taper Forum! She previously understudied the role of Charlotte in *The Mystery of Love & Sex*. Other recent theatre credits include *Ether Dome* (La Jolla Playhouse, dir. Michael Wilson), *Twelfth Night* (Coourage Theatre Company), and *Scott and Hem* (Garry Marshall Theatre). She holds a BA from Skidmore College and an MFA in acting from UC San Diego, where she performed roles such as Lorna Moon in *Golden Boy* and Constance Neville in *She Stoops to Conquer*. TV includes *NCIS: Los Angeles* (CBS) and *Colony* (USA). Film includes *Arriving Now*, *The Starlight*, and *The Birch Grove*. Thanks to Andrew at Center Theatre Group, Mark & Ashley at KMR, Brehan, and her family for their support. HannahTamminen.com



ROBERT MAFFIA (*Understudy for Paul, Michael*). Broadway: *Superior Donuts* by Tracy Letts (Music Box Theatre, dir. Tina Landau). Regional: *August: Osage County* (The Old Globe, dir. Sam Gold), *Superior Donuts* (Steppenwolf Theatre, premiere). Los Angeles: *Gus's Fashion & Shoes*, VS. Theatre (Stage Raw nom.). Chicago: *Stalag 17*, *Suicide in Bb*, *The Petrified Forest*, *Revelers*, *Never Come Morning*, *Insignificance*, *Edmond*, *Ice Cream*, *Savage in Limbo*, *Talk to Me Like the Rain...*, *The Two-Character Play*, *La Ronde*, Brecht's *Fatzer: Demise of the Egotist*. TV: *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *American Crime Story*, *Shameless*, *I'm Dying Up Here*, *Anger Management*, *Perception*, *Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, *Castle*, *Brothers and Sisters*, *CSI: NY*, *24*, *The Guardian*, *ER*. Film: *Excess Flesh* (SXSW 2015), *In Embryo*, *The Giant Mechanical Man*, *Mercury Rising*, *Hoffa*.



ELAINE RIVKIN (*Understudy for Margaret*) is a recent transplant from Chicago. At Steppenwolf Theatre: *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *The Crucible* (TYA), and understudied Laurie Metcalf in *Libra* (dir. John Malkovich); *Pyretown* and *Tree* at Victory Gardens; *City of Conversation* at Northlight Theatre; *Death of a Streetcar*

Named Virginia Woolf (US/performed) at Writers Theatre; and many shows as an ensemble member of Famous Door Theatre, including *Tiny Dimes* (dir. Dexter Bullard); *Conquest of the South Pole*, *The Homecoming* (dir. Gary Griffin). Regional: *One House Over* at Milwaukee Rep and Geva Theatre; *Marjorie Prime*, *Broken Glass*, and *The Lover* at North Coast Rep; *Brighton Beach Memoirs* at Cardinal Stage. LA: *Measure for Measure* at New American Theatre. TV/film: *Chicago P.D.*, *Imperfections*, *In the Name of God*. More info at elainerivkin.com.



VIRGINIA TRAN (*Understudy for Minnie*) is an actress, filmmaker, writer, and producer. She was raised in a Buddhist monastery in Northern California speaking Vietnamese, Mandarin Chinese, and English. In theatre, Tran played Kerri in the critically acclaimed and award-winning play *Skin Jobs*, featured in the

2018 Hollywood Fringe. Creator and executive producer of the original series *Wait Crimes* (2017); winner for Best Web Series at the Independent Filmmakers Showcase. Thank you to all that have supported me on my path; above all, my mother, whom I try to make proud every day.



TRACY LETTS (*Playwright*) is the only person to win both a Tony Award for acting and a Pulitzer Prize. He is the author of *The Minutes* (Pulitzer finalist), *Linda Vista*, *Mary Page Marlowe*, *The Scavenger's Daughter*, *Superior Donuts*, *August: Osage County* (Pulitzer Prize, Tony Award for Best Play), *Man from Nebraska*

(Pulitzer finalist), *Bug*, and *Killer Joe*. He also wrote the screenplays for the films *The Woman in the Window*, *August: Osage County*, *Bug*, and *Killer Joe*. He won the 2013 Tony Award for Best Leading Actor in a Play for his performance as George in the Tony Award-winning revival of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, which premiered at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre. He joined the Steppenwolf ensemble in 2002, where he has appeared in *American*

Buffalo, *Betrayal*, *The Pillowman*, *The Pain and the Itch*, *The Dresser*, *Homebody/Kabul*, *The Dazzle*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Three Days of Rain*, many others. Other productions include *The Realistic Joneses* (Broadway) and *Orson's Shadow* (Barrow Street Theatre, NY). Film appearances include *Little Women*, *Le Mans 66*, *The Post*, *Lady Bird*, *The Lovers*, *Indignation*, *Christine*, *The Big Short*, *Imperium*, *Wiener-Dog*, *Guinevere*. TV appearances include *The Sinner*, *Divorce*, *Homeland*, *Seinfeld*.



DEXTER BULLARD (*Director*). Steppenwolf: *The Flick*, *Linda Vista*. Broadway: *Grace*. Off-Broadway: *Lady* at Rattlestick, *Mistakes Were Made* and *Bug* (Lortel Award for Outstanding Direction) at Barrow Street. Chicago: *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Sucker Punch*, and *Mies Julie* at Victory Gardens; *The Big Meal* at

American Theater Company; *Odradek* at House; *Gas For Less* at Goodman; *Grace* at Northlight; *Mistakes Were Made*, *Bug*, *In the Solitude of Cotton Fields*, *Place of Angels*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* at A Red Orchid; *Reverie*, *Better Late Than Nader*, *Gratiot Happens!* with The Second City. Founder/Artistic Director of Plasticene (1995–2012), directing 14 original works in Chicago, New York, and Edinburgh. Founder/Artistic Director of The Next Lab (1990–1995), producing the World premiere of Tracy Letts' *Killer Joe*. BS Northwestern. MFA School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is the head of graduate acting at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

TODD ROSENTHAL (*Scenic Design*) is a Chicago-based set designer. Broadway credits include *August: Osage County* (Tony Award), *The Motherfucker with the Hat* (Tony nom.), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Tony Award for Best Revival), *Of Mice and Men* (filmed by National Theatre Live), *This Is Our Youth*, *Fish in the Dark*, and *Straight White Men*. Off-Broadway: *Red Light Winter*, Barrow Street Theatre; *Domesticated*, Lincoln Center; *Qualms*, Playwrights Horizons; *Close Up Space*, Manhattan Theatre Club. Set designer for six years for the Big Apple Circus. International credits include *August: Osage County* (National Theatre, London, Sydney Theatre, Australia); *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Theatre Royal, Ireland); *Nice Fish* (Harold Pinter Theatre, London); *Madama Butterfly*, Irish National Opera, Dublin, Ireland; and the upcoming *Downstate* at the National Theatre in London. Regional: Steppenwolf (33 productions), Goodman (artistic partner), Guthrie, Mark Taper Forum, American Repertory Theater,

La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, Berkeley Rep, Alley Theatre, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and many others. Select museum exhibitions: *Mythbusters: The Explosive Exhibition* and *The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes*. Other select awards: 2019 Distinguished Achievement Award presented by The United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT), Laurence Olivier, Helen Hayes, Ovation, Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, Joseph Jefferson, and the Michael Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration. Todd is presenting work at the 2019 Prague Quadrennial, an international exhibition of scenography. Full professor, Northwestern University. Graduate, Yale Drama.

LAURA BAUER (*Costume Design*). Broadway: *A Life in the Theatre*, *Speed the Plow*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Talk Radio*, *Top Girls*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *November*, and *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire du Lune*. She is a company member of the Atlantic Theater Company in NY and has worked extensively with Steppenwolf and Remains Theatre in Chicago. Her first time working with Tracy Letts was on the original production of *Killer Joe* at Next Theatre which is where she met Dexter Bullard. After that she produced the move of *Killer Joe* to the Edinburgh Festival. Mark Taper Forum: *The Mystery of Love & Sex*, *Appropriate*, *The Subject Was Roses*, and *November*. Kirk Douglas Theatre: *Throw Me on the Bumpile* and *Light Me Up*, *Vicuña*, and *Palomino*. Film: *Sweet and Lowdown* and Stephen Frears' *High Fidelity*, *Pieces of April*, and many others. TV: several pilots and two series.



MARCUS DOSHI (*Lighting Design*) designs for theatre, dance, opera, and non-performance-based work. International highlights include work with The Barbican, Royal Opera House, Festival Lyric d'Aix-en-Provence, La Comédie Française, La Monnaie, Venice Biennale, Dutch National Opera, Holland Festival,

Canadian Opera Company, Sydney Festival, many others. In the US he has worked with most major regional theatres and opera companies including ongoing collaborations with NYC's Theatre for a New Audience, including *A Winter's Tale*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *King Lear*, and others, and Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company, most recently *Mary Page Marlowe*, *Linda Vista*, *Familiar*, *Pass Over* (including the Spike Lee film), and others. Education:

Wabash College, Yale School of Drama. Teaching: Associate Professor of Theatre, Northwestern University. marcusdoshi.com

RICHARD WOODBURY (*Sound Design*). Credits include original music and/or sound design for Chicago's Goodman Theatre (*Enemy of the People*, *Blind Date*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *Uncle Vanya*, *2666*, *The Little Foxes*, *stop. reset.*, *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn*, *Luna Gale*, and others) and Steppenwolf (*HIR*, *Linda Vista*, *Mary Page Marlowe*, *The Night Alive*, *Slowgirl*, and others). Broadway credits include *Desire Under the Elms*, *August: Osage County*, *Talk Radio*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and others. Regional and international credits include productions at Writers Theatre, The Geffen Playhouse, The Guthrie, the Stratford Festival in Canada, London's Lyric and National Theatres, and the Theatre Marigny in Paris. Richard has received Joseph Jefferson, Helen Hayes, Ovation, and IRNE Awards for Outstanding Sound Design and the Ruth Page Award for Outstanding Collaborative Artist.

EDWARD SOBEL (*Dramaturg*) is grateful to be working with Tracy and Dexter again. Recent credits as dramaturg: *The Minutes*, *Linda Vista*, and *Mary Page Marlowe* (all by Tracy Letts) at Steppenwolf. Broadway credits as dramaturg: Letts' *August: Osage County* and *Superior Donuts*. Recent directing credits: World premieres of James Ijames' plays *Moon Man Walk* (Orbiter 3) and *The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington* (Flashpoint Theatre); *Endgame*, *Clybourne Park*, and *Superior Donuts* (Arden Theatre). Formerly, Ed was Director of New Play Development at Steppenwolf, overseeing development of more than 40 new plays, and Associate Artistic Director at the Arden. He received the Elliott Hayes Award from the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas for outstanding contribution to the field. He is a faculty member at Villanova University.

JC CLEMENTZ (*Casting*) is the casting director at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company. As casting director at Steppenwolf, and previously at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, he has cast over 85 productions out of Chicago, New York City, and Los Angeles. Highlights include the World premieres of *Linda Vista* and *The Minutes* by Tracy Letts, *Downstate* by Bruce Norris (also National Theatre, UK), *The Doppelganger* (an international farce) starring Rainn Wilson, and Antoinette Nwandu's *Pass Over*, which was filmed at Steppenwolf by Spike Lee and made its debut

at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. JC holds an MFA in directing from Western Illinois University and frequently directs productions across the country. jcclementz.com

STEPPENWOLF THEATRE COMPANY is the nation's premier ensemble theatre based in Chicago. Founded in 1976 by Gary Sinise, Jeff Perry, and Terry Kinney, the ensemble has grown to over 50 members who are among the top actors, directors, and playwrights in American theatre. Powerful productions from *Balm in Gilead* to *August: Osage County* and *Pass Over*—and accolades including the National Medal of Arts and 12 Tony Awards—have made the theatre legendary. Programming includes a seven-play season; a two-play Young Adults season; Visiting Company engagements; and LookOut, a multi-genre series. Steppenwolf Education serves thousands of students, teachers, and families annually with engaging programming in schools and communities. While firmly rooted in Chicago, over 40 original Steppenwolf plays have enjoyed success both nationally and internationally. Anna D. Shapiro is the Artistic Director, David Schmitz is the Executive Director, and Eric Lefkofsky is Chair of the Board of Trustees. steppenwolf.org



DAVID S. FRANKLIN (*Production Stage Manager*). Center Theatre Group highlights: *An Enemy of the People*, Baz Luhrmann's *La Bohème*, *Art*, *Romance*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Curtains*, *Nightingale*, *The History Boys*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Two Unrelated Plays by David Mamet*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*,

Parade, *The Subject Was Roses*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, Randy Newman's *Harps and Angels*, *God of Carnage*, *Vigil*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Los Otros*, *Red*, *Seminar*, *Tribes*, *Humor Abuse*, *The Steward of Christendom*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *Bent*, *The Christians*, *Disgraced*, *A View From The Bridge*, *Zoot Suit*, *Archduke*, *King of the Yees*, *Head of Passes*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *Sweat*, *Valley of the Heart*, and had the pleasure of assisting on *Soft Power*. Other Los Angeles: Los Angeles Theatre Center in its heyday from 1985–1990, Pasadena Playhouse, and the Geffen Playhouse. Regional: Seattle Rep, Intiman Theatre. New York: Public Theater. Tours: Europe—*Quotations from a Ruined City*, *Law of Remains* (with Reza Abdoh's Dar a Luz company).



MICHELLE BLAIR (*Stage Manager, L.A.*) has worked on over 30 productions for Center Theatre Group. Some highlights include *Sweat*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *Head of Passes*, *Heisenberg*, *Archduke*, *Zoot Suit*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Christians*, *Bent*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Red*, *Vigil*, *Leap of Faith*,

The Lieutenant of Inishmore, *Parade*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Nightingale*, *all wear bowlers*, *Topdog/Underdog*, and "QED" at Lincoln Center Theater. Other favorites include *The Tempest* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, *Henry IV* with Shakespeare Center Los Angeles, *The Pee-wee Herman Show* at Club Nokia, *A Long Bridge Over Deep Waters* with Cornerstone Theater Company, and *Jersey Boys* in Las Vegas. Graduate of the University of Southern California and the University of Amsterdam. Mom to 10-year-old Liam and six-year old Imogen.



JACLYNN JOSLIN (*Stage Manager, Chicago*) is thrilled to be working with Center Theatre Group for the first time! Her Chicago credits include *Guards at the Taj*, *BLKS*, *The Crucible*, *Between Riverside and Crazy*, *The Flick*, *East of Eden* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *All My Sons*,

Harvey, *The Hard Problem*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Court Theatre); *Continuity*, *The King of Hell's Palace* (Goodman Theatre); *Hard Times* (Lookingglass Theatre); *Roz and Ray* (Victory Gardens); *The Outgoing Tide*, *Oceanside*, *13 Things About Ed Carpolotti*, *Year Zero* (Merrimack Repertory Theatre).

Center Theatre Group



MICHAEL RITCHIE (*Artistic Director*) is in his 14TH season as Center Theatre Group's Artistic Director, and has led over 200 productions to the Ahmanson, Taper, and Douglas stages since his arrival in 2005. From 1996–2004 Michael was the Producer of the Williamstown Theatre Festival and prior to that he was a

production stage manager in NYC. At Center Theatre Group, he premiered six musicals that moved to Broadway—*The Drowsy Chaperone* (which won 13 Tony Award nominations), *Curtains* (eight Tony nominations), *13, 9 to 5: The Musical*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, and *Leap of Faith*. He has

produced 40 World premieres including the musicals *Soft Power*, *Minsky's*, *Venice*, and *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, and the plays *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (a Pulitzer Prize finalist that also moved to Broadway), *Water & Power*, and *Yellow Face*, and presented a broad range of plays and musicals ranging from *Dead End* to *The Black Rider* to *Edward Scissorhands* to blockbusters such as *Dear Evan Hansen*, *God of Carnage*, *Mary Poppins*, *Jersey Boys*, and *August: Osage County*. In addition, Michael inaugurated Center Theatre Group's Artistic Development Program, designed to foster the development and production of new work.



DOUGLAS C. BAKER (*Producing Director*) is now in his 29TH season at Center Theatre Group. Previously, he managed Broadway and touring productions including *Tru*, *Born Yesterday*, *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Annie*, *A Chorus Line*, *Working*, *The Wiz*, and *Legends!* starring Mary Martin and Carol Channing, which premiered at the

Ahmanson Theatre in 1986. He is an active member of the Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network, and is a proud member of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers. In May 2013, Doug received the Broadway League's prestigious Outstanding Achievement in Presenter Management Award.



LINDSAY ALLBAUGH (*Associate Producer*) is a member of Center Theatre Group's artistic staff and has served in varying capacities for the past 14 years. Selected producing credits include—Mark Taper Forum: *Archduke*, *Bent*, *What the Butler Saw*, *Steward of Christendom*, *Waiting for Godot*; Kirk Douglas Theatre: *Quack*,

Block Party, *Big Night*, *Good Grief*, *Vicuña*, *Throw Me On the Burnpile* and *Light Me Up*, *Endgame*, *Women Laughing Alone With Salad*, *Chavez Ravine*, *Race*, *different words for the same thing*, *The Nether*. Co-Artistic Director of the Elephant Theatre 2004–2014.



NAUSICIA STERGIU (*General Manager, Mark Taper Forum and Kirk Douglas Theatre*) has worked professionally supporting artists in theatres of all shapes, sizes, and locales including many seasons at Center Theatre Group as General Manager and, previously, as Audience Development Director. She oversees

mainstage productions at the Taper and Douglas, as well as new play commissions and developmental productions through Center Theatre Group's New Play Development. Nausica has taught at USC's School of Dramatic Arts, and advises and works with local nonprofits including Hollywood Orchard.



GORDON DAVIDSON (*Founding Artistic Director*) led the Taper throughout its first 38 seasons, guiding over 300 productions to its stage and winning countless awards for himself and the theatre—including the Tony Award for theatrical excellence, Margo Jones Award, The Governor's Award for the Arts, and a Guggenheim

fellowship. *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Angels in America (Part One)* won the Pulitzer in consecutive years and, in 1994, three of the four plays nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play were from the Taper (*Angels in America* won). In 1989, Gordon took over the Ahmanson and, in 2004, he produced the inaugural season in the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

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*In Memoriam

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A Q&A WITH IAN BARFORD

The Actor behind the Character of Wheeler Discusses *Linda Vista*

IAN BARFORD has originated four roles in Tracy Letts' canon of plays: Little Charles in *August: Osage County* (which he continued on Broadway), Ray in *Mary Page Marlowe*, Mr. Carp in *The Minutes*, and Wheeler in *Linda Vista*, which he steps back into at the Taper. In addition to their relationship as actor and playwright, Barford and Letts are both ensemble members of Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company and longtime friends with hugely impressive resumes on stage and screen. But, as Barford said when he stepped away from rehearsals to discuss his personal connection to the play, *Linda Vista* is unique in a number of ways for them both.

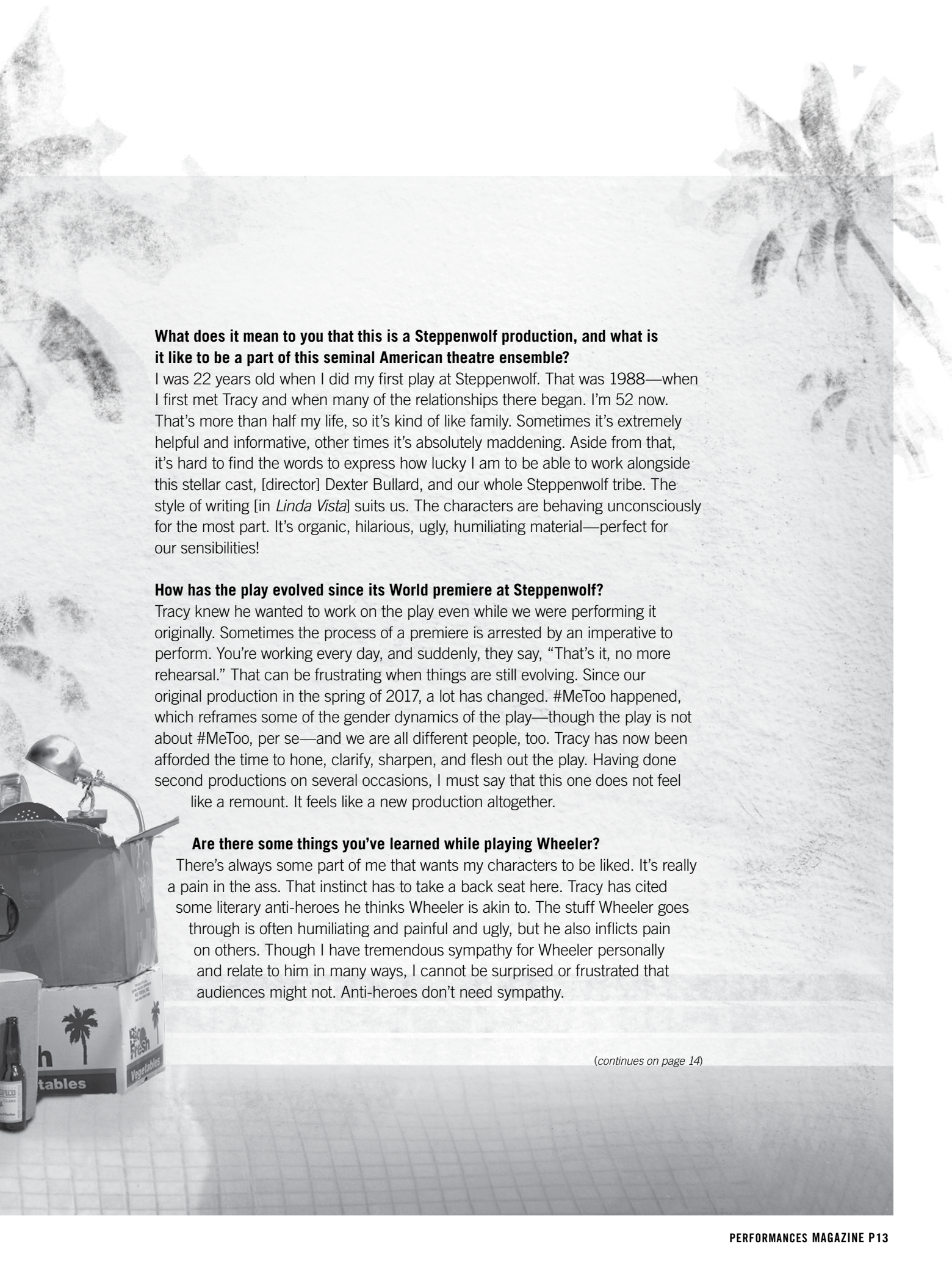
What did you think when you first read the script for *Linda Vista*?

I immediately recognized how alive and contemporary and dynamic the dialogue was. One of Tracy's great gifts as a playwright is his ability to write distinct characters—individuals with their own history and dimension often quite apart from his own. I was amazed to see that Tracy allowed his own voice to come through so directly in Wheeler. The rants on politics, music, culture, etc. are definitely autobiographical.

To my knowledge, Wheeler is the first true protagonist he's written. Most of his plays function with ensembles that may have central characters but maybe not a traditional protagonist.

What has that meant for you as an actor, as well as his friend and colleague?

I've known Tracy for 30 years. We've remained friends through thick and thin. We've shared in each other's lives—the dark times, loss, tremendous triumphs and joys, the emergence of our children. We have worked together many times both as fellow actors and also as playwright/actor. We are both from the Midwest, born in the mid '60s, had parents who were academics. Wheeler is a kind of alchemy of many men Tracy has known and of himself. The worldview and general condition of Wheeler's psyche is extremely familiar to me and even very personal. I've originated four roles in Tracy's plays now—that's something I truly cherish.



What does it mean to you that this is a Steppenwolf production, and what is it like to be a part of this seminal American theatre ensemble?

I was 22 years old when I did my first play at Steppenwolf. That was 1988—when I first met Tracy and when many of the relationships there began. I'm 52 now. That's more than half my life, so it's kind of like family. Sometimes it's extremely helpful and informative, other times it's absolutely maddening. Aside from that, it's hard to find the words to express how lucky I am to be able to work alongside this stellar cast, [director] Dexter Bullard, and our whole Steppenwolf tribe. The style of writing [in *Linda Vista*] suits us. The characters are behaving unconsciously for the most part. It's organic, hilarious, ugly, humiliating material—perfect for our sensibilities!

How has the play evolved since its World premiere at Steppenwolf?

Tracy knew he wanted to work on the play even while we were performing it originally. Sometimes the process of a premiere is arrested by an imperative to perform. You're working every day, and suddenly, they say, "That's it, no more rehearsal." That can be frustrating when things are still evolving. Since our original production in the spring of 2017, a lot has changed. #MeToo happened, which reframes some of the gender dynamics of the play—though the play is not about #MeToo, per se—and we are all different people, too. Tracy has now been afforded the time to hone, clarify, sharpen, and flesh out the play. Having done second productions on several occasions, I must say that this one does not feel like a remount. It feels like a new production altogether.

Are there some things you've learned while playing Wheeler?

There's always some part of me that wants my characters to be liked. It's really a pain in the ass. That instinct has to take a back seat here. Tracy has cited some literary anti-heroes he thinks Wheeler is akin to. The stuff Wheeler goes through is often humiliating and painful and ugly, but he also inflicts pain on others. Though I have tremendous sympathy for Wheeler personally and relate to him in many ways, I cannot be surprised or frustrated that audiences might not. Anti-heroes don't need sympathy.

(continues on page 14)

(continued from page 13)

What are your thoughts on California audiences seeing this play?

I lived in L.A. for seven years. I think it's no accident that the play is set in California. It really does reflect a lot of the kinds of people who end up here and who are looking for something here—themselves, some answer, some dream. I know we're doing it in L.A. and the play takes place in San Diego, but it really feels germane to the region. The play is filled with characters who are looking for fulfillment. They may not even know what they are looking for. Californians will also understand the literal meaning of *linda vista* (beautiful view).

What do you hope Taper audiences will expect or take away from *Linda Vista*?

First, the play is great fun. Tracy's humor is second to none. On top of that, the play offers a compelling view of people who are struggling with self-awareness. I suspect folks who see the play might have opposing views about the characters—what might have been motivating them, who was sympathetic, who was right and wrong. Tracy does a wonderful job of bringing dimension to the people who inhabit this play. It shows men and women in very vulnerable situations that reveal layers that are very raw. Our ability to mature enough so that we can meet relationships with a "whole self" is rare. It's usually kind of messy, isn't it? We're dealing with the things we know about ourselves and with the things we don't know about ourselves. I think the play expresses all of that beautifully. Hilarious, yes, but also poignant and painful.

You were also in *Dead End at the Ahmanson* in 2005! What is it like coming back to Center Theatre Group?

It's fantastic! *Dead End* was one of the most enjoyable theatrical experiences I've ever had. I adore that cast; I miss those people. I hope many of them will come see *Linda Vista*.

“...Anti-heroes don't need sympathy.”



Top (L-R): Ian Barford and Tim Hopper. | Bottom (L-R): Ian Barford and Troy West. | Ian Barford and Caroline Neff. | World premiere at Steppenwolf. Photos by Michael Brosilow.



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