

BEGINS SEPTEMBER 19 / THE HAYES THEATER

STEPPENWOLF'S PRODUCTION OF

# LINDA VISTA

BY

TRACY LETTS

DIRECTED BY

DEXTER BULLARD

“Might just be Mr. Letts’ best play yet.” - *The Wall Street Journal*

Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award® winner Tracy Letts (*August: Osage County*) takes a brutally comedic look at Wheeler, a 50-year-old divorcee in the throes of a mid-life spiral. Just out of his ex-wife’s garage and into a place of his own, Wheeler starts on a path toward self-discovery — navigating blind dates, old friends, and new love. Full of opinions, yet short on self-examination, Wheeler must reconcile the man he has become with the man he wants to be.

This Steppenwolf Theatre production of *Linda Vista* is presented in association with Center Theatre Group.

Please note: *Linda Vista* is recommended for ages 16+ for nudity and frank depictions of sex.

## A CONVERSATION WITH TRACY LETTS

**HOW DID YOU START WRITING *LINDA VISTA*? WAS IT A FREE WRITING PROCESS OR WAS THERE A SPECIFIC IDEA FROM THE START?**

I began *Linda Vista* in a way I have never before begun a play. I rolled a blank sheet into my typewriter and without an idea in my head started typing. What emerged was a conversation between two friends in their 50’s. What grew out of that conversation was *Linda Vista*. Most writers will, I think, take a stab at free writing every now and again, just as exercise if nothing else. I would imagine it’s rare that it ever turns into anything of any consequence — or even reaches completion. *Linda Vista* surprised me.

**THIS PLAY IS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF A MAN IN HIS FIFTIES. YOU ARE A MAN IN YOUR FIFTIES. HOW MUCH OF YOU IS IN THIS PLAY AND IN THIS CHARACTER?**

A lot of it is me, but then all of my characters are versions of me. Wheeler just may be a version of me that is closer in some respects to the real me. Or perhaps he’s a version of me that MIGHT have existed in some parallel universe if I hadn’t made some different choices in my life. But he also borrows liberally from friends who are my age, and a lot of his character is imagination. So as usual, he’s an amalgam.

**WE SEE THE “MIDLIFE CRISIS” STAGE FROM MANY DIFFERENT ANGLES — MARRIAGE (AND DIVORCE), SEX, WORK, FRIENDSHIP, POPULAR CULTURE. YOU TREAT WHEELER’S STORY ALMOST LIKE A COMING-OF-AGE STORY. WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST FASCINATING (OR FRIGHTENING) ABOUT THIS TIME IN A PERSON’S LIFE?**

Change is both fascinating and frightening. I believe people don’t change much actually...at least not as dramatically as is often portrayed in storytelling. I find humans change slowly, glacially, in small increments. Still...a small change is a big change in anything or anyone that hardly changes. One of the things I love about Wheeler is that he fights savagely to resist change while in possession of an innate understanding that change is essential. I find that dichotomy relatable...and universal.

**THIS PRODUCTION FEATURES A POWERHOUSE ENSEMBLE OF WELL-KNOWN STEPPENWOLF ACTORS. WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE GETTING TO DEVELOP THE PLAY WITH THEM?**

I’m so lucky to be able to write for this ensemble, this powerful, eccentric, hilarious, maddening, damnable ensemble. They bring a full life with them every time they walk on stage. My loyalty to the home team is shameless, but damn it, they’re just better.

**AND FINALLY, WHAT TYPES OF THINGS ARE YOU DOING WHEN NOT WORKING ON A PLAY OR AT THE THEATER?**

Normally I would make some crack, like, “You mean there’s something else to do beside work on a play?” But I have a one-year old so that joke doesn’t work anymore. I’m hanging with my boy.